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THE ART OF CRITICISM.

BAYERISCHE
STAATS-
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MUENCHEN

THE

ART OF CRITICISM;

AS EXEMPLIFIED IN

DR. JOHNSON'S LIVES

OF

THE MOST EMINENT ENGLISH POETS.

——————— Ne fortè pudori
Sit tibi Muſa Lyræ ſolers, et Cantor Apollo.

LONDON:

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MDCCLXXXIX.

BAYERISCHE
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THE

ART OF CRITICISM.

COWLEY.

ONE who pretends to give his opinion of ſuch a work as the *Lives of the Poets*, ought to fancy himſelf qualified to prefix a ſomewhat ſatisfactory definition of genius. I therefore denominate it briefly,—*a* mind *vigorous, comprehenſive, and indued with curioſity and ſuſceptibility of impreſſion.* Our author, near the beginning, teaches, that "the true genius is a mind of large and "general powers, accidentally determined "to ſome particular direction."

"The true genius is a mind of large and "general powers," would perhaps have

been a good diſtinction; but by what the Doctor adds, he would ſuppoſe there is no natural bent of the mind; which experience proves to be erroneous. Were it not, parents are right in diſregarding the early indications of their children, whence to determine them to the moſt ſuitable occupations; or rather, there are no ſuch indications; and much pleaſantry has been ill beſtowed on whipping pedagogues. But, in truth, the minds of men may be rather compared to lands, the kindlineſs of which for particular cropping is, farmers well know, to be regarded. On the other hand, the knowledge of ſome things may be in almoſt every mind, as ſome plants thrive in almoſt any ſoil.

On our author's hypotheſis, Cicero might have been a Virgil; Hogarth a Raphael; and himſelf a Petrarch. He ſoon afterwards ſays of wit,—

"Wit, like all other things ſubject by
"their nature to the choice of man, has its
"changes and faſhions; and at different
"times

" times takes different forms." Afterwards he ſays, " real mirth muſt be always na-
" tural, and nature is uniform."

Is not then the eſſence of wit, as well as humour, uniform? Will not certain combinations of thought, always conſtitute one as well as the other?

" Do thou but threat."—— COWLEY.

" Every reader" (ſays our author) " finds
" himſelf weary with this uſeleſs talk of an
" allegorical being."

Many have but an indifferent opinion of the uſefulneſs of any poetry.

Putting this ſpeech in the mouth of *Envy*, may perhaps be cenſurable in Epic proper; otherwiſe I think it beautiful, and the ſound is wonderfully adapted to the ſenſe. In " ſtill at thy *voice* ſtart,"—every ear, to which the chinking of a guinea is not more agreeable than ſterling verſe, will lay the emphaſis on *voice*; and many of Cowley's

lines ſhould be ſcanned in reading, like this in his Nemeæan Ode of Pindar,—

Black *blood*, and *fi'ry breath*, and pois'nous *ſoul* he *ſqueezes out*.

Moreover, thoſe who wiſh to maſter Engliſh verſification, ſhould practice reading Cowleys, Shakeſpeares, and Miltons.

Cowley is, on the whole, pourtrayed with ingenuity and penetration, and with juſtice; ſo that indeed it is not eaſy to add much to that which our author has ſaid of him.

DENHAM.

BAYERISCHE
STAATS-
BIBLIOTHEK
MÜNCHEN

DENHAM.

THERE is a falſe concord in the ſixth line of the quotation concerning tranſlation: *ſtick* ſhould be *ſticks*; *narrowneſs*, not *arts*, being the correſpondent.

" Some hour propitious to poetry."—I hope our author will not contradict this hereafter. In the verſes on the Thames, *whoſe gravel* would have been better.

MILTON.

" THE ſpeed of the horſeman muſt be " limited to the power of his " horſe." Yet ſomewhat depends on the ſkill of the rider.

" The celebrated word *Smectymnuus*"— I am at a loſs to apprehend how the initial letters (of the names of ſix perſons I ſuppoſe he means, if he means any thing,) could form a word of juſt eleven.

" Such is the controverſial merriment of " Milton. His gloomy ſerioufneſs is yet " more offenſive. Such is his malignity, " that hell grows darker at his frown." This is a dreadful relation, which our author was reſolved ſhould not fall ſhort in hideouſneſs of its object.

Some pages after, we have *either* for *both*. " He was now poor and blind." A pertinent remark, which, together with the conſideration

conſideration of his fine genius, may account for the favour ſhewn him by a monarch not deſtitute of genius himſelf, whoſe right withal, like that of others to ſovereignty, was originally founded on actions little leſs dark than hell; ſo that the affection for all great perſons whatſoever, muſt virtually and rationally depend on their own deſerts, not on thoſe of their tyrant-progenitors, to adore whom would not be far from worſhiping the devil.

" All his wives were virgins." A peremptory aſſertion truly.

" Miniſterial," uſed in a double meaning unworthy of the author of a large dictionary.

" This dependance of the ſoul upon" (why *upon?* would not *on* be ſufficient?) " the ſeaſons; thoſe temporary and peri-" odical ebbs and flows of intellect may, I " ſuppoſe, juſtly be derided as the fumes " of vain imagination. *Sapiens dominabitur* " *aſtris*;" — ſed, *aſtra regunt homines*. I warned the Doctor not to contradict his

" hour propitious to poetry." Indeed I do not affirm that he does ſo here. However, experience, I apprehend, convinces moſt perſons of being affected by the ſeaſons and weather, which is true to a proverb. Alſo, why may not the moon influence genius as well as an ague? It is reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that ſuch a one as Milton's might ſometimes flag. *Non ſemper arcum tendit Apollo.* And it is not likely that he ſhould fancifully ſuppoſe himſelf inſpired in the winter, and not in the beſt part of the year; he who was ſo rapt with vernal delight. A little after the Doctor is undoubtedly right. Since a northern iſland, Britain, has produced more genius than all the world beſides, ſufficiently confuting the notion of geographical genius; nevertheleſs Dutchmen would do well to apply themſelves rather to the culture of cabbages.

" If leſs could be performed by the
" writer, leſs likewiſe would content the
" judges of his work."

It is the character of genius to grafp at perfection and univerfality. However, the Doctor at length ridicules his own criticifm with much candour, and draws his humour to a focus, by admitting that at all events the author of *Paradife Loft* might have been the rival of Tom Thumb, or a one-eyed mole; and that the copy might be worth a middling horfe. But it feems ftrange that his daughters fhould read feveral languages all day long without underftanding a word of any one.

"*L'Allegro & Il Penferofo.*"—It is amazing that from fingularity and caprice, the worthy Doctor fhould attack his whole fraternity of poets while he is writing their lives. He wifhed, one would think, to perfuade that he had a general averfion to nature. If he mentions love, it is to ridicule it; if the country, it is to ficken at it. Alas! Johnfon had no tafte for a garden, grove, or a fpring. *Spęluncæ vivique lacus*, the darkling dell and the nightingale had no charms for him. To him the elements of poetry were uncongenial, and only excited his laughter.

laughter. According to one of his *Ramblers*, a ſwept hearth, fire-pan and tongs were his inſpirers; and if, perhaps, he did not prefer a marrow-bone, he delighted in wielding the cleaver of criticiſm; and the ſmoke of London was as pleaſant to him as a coal-pit to a neighbour of Newcaſtle. How different was his maſter! Is it poſſible that the imitator of Addiſon ſhould be fonder of a ſhining fender than a brook, and that the writer of the Engliſh Dictionary ſhould with the hand of burleſque, throw dirt at the *Penſeroſo*, at that which breathes the very ſoul of ſimplicity? Metaphyſical wit was indeed ill calculated for Johnſon, who expected rather to make a ſound meal of a poem, than to quaff ſpiritual nectar. Alas! the manner in which the Penſeroſo is ſtripped of its colouring! As if a traveller ſhould picture a fine palace by ſaying, that the floor of a chamber was taken from a rookery; a door brought from Jamaica; a wainſcot from Norway; and a painted window from an imperial monaſtery.

Reciting a poem in ſuch a detached manner,

ner, is like expecting a clock to ſtrike when taken to pieces; is not analyſing, but diſſo-cating. The *Allegro*, valuable as it is, is neceſſarily inferior; but is copied by a taſty modern, the author of the *Bath-Guide*. In the following pages, a good character is given of Comus, which is then diſmiſſed as "inelegantly ſplendid, and tediouſly in-"ſtructive." We are wound up to a con-ſiderable pitch of expectation, and then, at laſt, as Virgil and Homer raiſed ſounding names with the intention of knocking their owners at head,—hey! paſs! 'tis gone! On the contrary, after exerting his humour on the *Penſeroſo* and *Allegro*, the Doctor converts them into "two noble efforts of "imagination." The reader is in the ſitua-ation of James I. who, when he heard a cauſe, was always of the opinion of the counſel who ſpoke laſt. When Johnſon is at work on his fig-tree, it is impoſſible to tell whether he will convert it to a god or a chopping-block.

"I am now to examine *Paradiſe Loſt*; "a poem, which, conſidered with reſpect

"to

" to deſign, may claim the firſt place; and,
" with reſpect to performance, the ſecond,
" among the productions of the human
" mind."

In regard to this aſſertion, doubtleſs little acceptable to the admirers of Virgil thus denied competition; it does not require much penetration to diſcover that, for deſign, Johnſon places *Paradiſe Loſt* before the *Iliad*, and for performance, between that and the Eneid; the Odyſſey, &c. being, I preſume out of the queſtion: that conſequently *Paradiſe Loſt* is ſuperior or inferior to the *Iliad*, as deſign and performance are to be comparatively rated. The reader, nevertheleſs, pondering whether, the arduouſneſs of his ſubject taken into the account, Milton's performance, as well as deſign, is not equal to Homer's. Still perhaps we ſhould not haſtily aſcribe to Milton an abſolute preference, by reaſon of the perhaps accidental diſadvantage of Homer, that Milton's unparalled ſubject was not within the compaſs of his choice, becauſe unknown to him; and becauſe Milton was his imi-

tator

tator in outrageouſneſs. Perhaps indeed the *Iliad* may be conſidered as more the offspring of the genuine rays of Phœbus, *Paradiſe Loſt* as an exotic product of the hot-houſe; perhaps the former may claim the palm of nature, the latter of art.

" Its peruſal is a duty rather than a plea-
" ſure. We read Milton for inſtruction;
" retire haraſſed and overburdened; and
" look elſewhere for recreation. We deſert
" our maſter, and ſeek for companions."

It may be doubted whether this is pane-gyric or ſatire; but it hardly correſponds with the angelic war being the " favourite " of children," which yet it is. It muſt be confeſſed, that there are in *Paradiſe Loſt* many rugged paths between its ſcenes of grandeur and beauty. As to ſchoolmaſters, of which uſeful fraternity was Milton, being the butts of the world, the reaſon is plain; they being ſure to run the gauntlet of their ſcholars for life, and to be repaid in wit for birch; and to ridicule them more effectual-ly, our language has conſpired by aſſigning them

them an odd appellation. When Pipes had worn to pieces his love-letter, he is diſpatched to a ſorry *pedagogue* to ſupply him with an elegant ſuccedaneum.

Our author's obſervations on verſification are ſuch as diſcover his dexterity in defence of gingle. The reader will be pleaſed with Mrs. Montague's remark on blank verſe, in her critique on Corneille's Cinna.—" Poſſi-
" bly there is as much of difficulty in blank
" verſe to the poet (not, I think, to thoſe
" converſant in it) as there appears of eaſe
" in it to the reader. Like the ceſtus of
" Venus, formed by the happy ſkill of the
" graces, it beſt exerts its charms, whilſt
" the artifice of the texture is partly con-
" cealed. Dryden, who brought the art
" of rhyme to great excellence, endea-
" voured to introduce it on our ſtage; but
" nature and taſte revolted againſt an imi-
" tation of dialogue, ſo entirely different
" from that in which men diſcourſe.

" The verſe M. de Voltaire thus con-
" demns, is perhaps not leſs happily (bet-
" ter

" ter ſurely) adapted, than the iambic to
" the dramatic offices. It riſes gracefully
" into the ſublime; it can ſlide happily in-
" to the familiar; haſten its career if com-
" pelled by vehemence of paſſion; pauſe in
" the heſitation of doubt; appear lingering
" and languid, in dejection and ſorrow; is
" capable of varying its accent, and adapt-
" ing its harmony to the ſentiment it ſhould
" convey, and the paſſion it would excite,
" with all the power of muſical expreſſion."

This fine deſcription, though a lady's, is embaraſſed with a pedantic ſuperabundance of comma's, which, multiplied, are often productive of confuſion inſtead of clearneſs. Mr. Maſon obſerves, that dramatic, which is colloquial verſe, muſt eſpecially have pauſes in the lines; and that in blank verſe in general, " the harmony never reſults
" from lines, but paſſages; and thoſe of
" very unequal extent."

Rhyme, in which Otway and Dryden wrote tragedy, has, after I have been read-
ing blank verſe, appeared to me trifling,
tink-

tinkling, and childiſh, like Latin rhymes, in other ſpecies of poetry as well as dramatic; and muſt, I think, in every kind of writing have ſuch an effect on manly ears accuſtomed to the dignity of blank verſe, though a forbidding term. Highly prepoſterous it certainly is, to jingle through paſſion and deſpair, horrors and death. Blank verſe is ſufficiently out of the track of converſation; and though poetical proſe, like that of *Telemachus*, is rather dull in the cloſet; I cannot help thinking that, plays being intended for acting, not reading, it is habit that has confirmed the opinion that verſe of ſome kind is neceſſary to the ſtage, and that admeaſurement is indiſpenſable to the *vis dramatica*. If, however, notwithſtanding that, according to Horace, tragedy, for the moſt part, complains in familiar language, goes on foot inſtead of riding the great horſe; it is nevertheleſs adjudged that verſe cannot be diſpenſed with: ſtill much of a tragedy might be in proſaic, riſing occaſionally into verſe when the fervour of paſſion or of ſentiment may be imagined to raiſe the ſoul to enthuſiaſm, and dictate numbers to the

actor,

actor, as the writer might have been thus affected, namely, thoſe of blank verſe certainly more fluent and eaſy than rhymes; the latter being, by Joſeph Warton, well compared to latin hexameter and pentameter, which are indeed adapted to love ſongs, Cupid, and childiſhneſs. Johnſon had the perſpicacity to perceive that rhymes are fitted to didactic terſeneſs, for which alone he was qualified, and therefore wiſely alleges all that can be ſaid in favour of it, as he does alſo of Pope's modernization of Homer. Compared with the learned claſſical Joſeph Warton, Johnſon has, together with affectation and rhodomontade, more ſhrewdneſs and poignancy, but uſually leſs taſte and candour; their ſentiments ſometimes agreeing, but being as often different and oppoſite. Of the mud caſt by Johnſon, as related by Boſwell, on Mrs. Montague's book, the true motive was probably her neglect of him, his ſavage manners not ſuiting her groupe of literati. As *Telemachus* in general, and many parts of the *Arcadia*, and of the *Scriptures*, may be properly ſtiled *poetic proſe*, perhaps Biſhop Lowth's verſion

of *Iſaiah* may be properly denominated *proſaic poetry*.

Our author, cynical as he was, waved, in paſſing final ſentence on Milton's epic, his ſneering, and even a due reprehenſion of *Paradiſe Loſt*, which is very faulty in the converſion of all things to the purpoſe of poetical embelliſhment, whereby he has conſtituted a huge chaotic romance.

It is true that in the Old Teſtament, the chariots, arrows, ſhield, &c. of the Almighty, are figuratively ſpoken of; but it is caſually. The Meſſiah and the angels are not repreſented as battling with ſwords, ſpears, muſquets, and cannon, united with all the extravagance of Homer's fighting mythology, whilſt Satan is ſometimes deſcribed in ſuch a manner, his proweſs is ſo mighty, and his armour ſo brilliant, as to tend to excite admiration inſtead of horror. Again, as to theology; Milton is any thing or nothing; Trinitarian, Arian, Socinian, or neither, as ſuited his poetry; and I know not but he would have been

Mahometan,

Mahometan, or Diabolian, had Cromwell, the devil's ſecretary, Milton being under-ſecretary, commanded it: therefore the inſtruction we look for in *Paradiſe Loſt*, can hardly be eminent reſpecting the faith of this great maſter.

Pope has an infamous couplet, wherein, for the ſake of his poetry, he paſſes an indirect panegyric on the apoſtate angels,—

" Ambition firſt ſprung from your bleſs'd abodes;
" The glorious fault of angels and of gods."

Milton was no leſs unequal than Cowley; his verſions of ſome pſalms being in the true ſtile of Sternhold and Hopkins, and inferior to Bacon's; and the concluding line in particular of the ſonnet on his wife, is in the Cowleian ſtile of wit.

BUTLER.

" Omnia vult belle Matho dicere; dic aliquando
" Et bene, dic neutrum, dic aliquando male."

ADDISON indeed obſerves, that Milton knew the art of relieving the reader at intervals, in order to unbend his mind to come freſh to his principal ſubject; but authors are rarely commended for the eaſy attainment of writing ill; and Johnſon, I believe, would have hardly acknowledged that ever he did, how true ſoever a confeſſion: he who would be always in the right. Some critics have taken great pains to excuſe Homer's naps, but have not endeavoured to raiſe merit from them; yet ſuch an allegation is a very convenient apology at leaſt.

" Imagination is uſeleſs without know-
" ledge," is ſo far true, that perſons in that predicament are poorly qualified to benefit others; but their minds are happily qualified for the reception of entertainment.

" Nor,

" Nor, even though another Butler " ſhould ariſe, would another *Hudibras* ob- " tain the ſame regard." But, according to our author's own theory, true general humour muſt always entertain; and ſomewhat of general humour is neceſſarily blended with particular; ſo that Cervantes, Butler, Anſtey, Peter Pindar, and others, will be always read with pleaſure. But burleſque, the grand ſource of ridicule, is of a nature leſs truly engaging, and will be conſequently leſs permanently prevalent when ludicrous than when grave; which latter kind of humour is rather a curious delineation of the foibles and manners of others, than any laughable repreſentation.

OTWAY.

AS to the affinity between writing and acting plays, one principally depends on mental, the other on corporeal accomplishments. The Irene of our author, who would not have excelled in the latter, has ſome inaccuracies, and too much of the horrible. Even tragedies are exhibited as entertainments; and who can be gratified with the repreſentation of tortures? It is the excitement of contemplative pity, of the ſentimental and ſpiritual affections, the terrific and alarming; like the cataſtrophe of the *Duke of Guiſe*, and of the magic of inventive and eccentric genius exhibited in the matchleſs hints of Shakeſpeare, that carrying us away from earth, are the beſt calculated for the drama, whatever is the verbal import of *tragedy*, rather than things excruciating and ſhocking to behold. It was probably to Shakeſpeare's ethereal imagination, that Milton, who, if allowed to be the greater poet, ought, to balance their deſerts,

deſerts, to reſign the palm of genius, was indebted for his exquiſiteneſs, and Pope for the manners of his Sylphs. In the *Tempeſt*, do we not acknowledge the fountain whence flowed the living ſpring of the *Penſeroſo*, and perceive the machinery of the *Rape of the Lock?* If Shakeſpeare, how childiſh ſoever are Proſpero's threats to Ariel, had not written

" Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell.
" Hark! now I hear them—Ding—dong—bell."

which itſelf, had it been by an ordinary writer tranſlated from Ovid, or written by Cowley, would, I ſuſpect, have been deemed childiſh. Indeed, as extremes in a manner meet, ſo do reaches and childiſhneſs of thought. If, I ſay, Shakeſpeare had not written theſe fancifully charming lines, would Milton have written

" Over ſome wide-water'd ſhore,
" Swinging ſlow with ſullen roar?"

Yet were they inhabited by twin ſouls, one of which might only anticipate the other. But if Milton drew from Shakeſpeare's fount, evident it is that Shakeſpeare him-

ſelf drew from a ſtill higher head, and watered the enchanting exotics of the *Tempeſt* from the celeſtial rivers of the Helicon of the *Apocalypſe*; witneſs theſe lines, &c.

" Sometimes a thouſand twanging inſtruments
" Will hum about mine ears, and ſometimes voices*."

By the way, how abſurd is Pope's aſſigning the guidance of the planets to ſuch puny agents as the Sylphs.

Otway's life is an imperfect epigram, becauſe too long.

* Revelation, chap. VIII. v. 5. chap. XIV .v. 2. &c.

WALLER.

WALLER.

" THE writer of the life prefixed to " his works." Why would not our author tell us who this was in one word, inſtead of employing nine, to leave us in the dark? The frequent occurrence of theſe blind periphraſes, is an objection to theſe *lives*, ſimilar to that which he makes to the epitaphs of Pope without the names, for though every one of the preſent age knows the perſons meant, that may not be the caſe with poſterity.

" *Sachariſſa*, from the Latin appellation " of *ſugar*." Sugar is ſaid to be an acid; and Waller's ſugar had undergone digeſtion.

" He doubtleſs praiſed many whom he " would have been afraid to marry; and " perhaps married one whom he would " have been aſhamed to praiſe."

Such

Such ſtrokes as theſe, how juſt ſoever is this in reſpect to truth, and how taſteful itſelf to the claſſical cenſures of antitheſis, who doat on the pure ſimplicity of the ancients, diſcriminate a writer of genius and enliven a ſubject. Antitheſes, eſpecially in rhyme, preſent themſelves at once to the mind, like a regular building. Mallet, in his life of Bacon, has ſome ſuch ſtrokes. Voltaire abounds with them, delighting eſpecially to level them at prieſts, whoſe aſſiſtance he is nevertheleſs ſaid to have craved when ſick, though I can hardly believe him to have been ſo weak as to reſt his ſalvation on a ſuborned repentance in the lap of men, who, like indeed other religioniſts, devote their faces to God, and hearts to the devil; and, a few members excepted, ought to be hooted out of the world for their villainous hypocriſy, and will doubtleſs bring the grey hairs of the church with ſorrow to the grave; wretches, whoſe trade it is to barter inheritances in the other world by auction. If that ſpright-ly author was deiſtical, I hope it cannot be truly affirmed that he was atheiſtical.

If

If his *candide* ſeems to bear hard on the goodneſs of Providence, it may be attributed to the reverberation of extremes propagated by others, and to his impatience of Pope's fataliſm, differing from that of others in imputing the diſorders of the world to the Subreme Being; whereas other fataliſts annul his providence, by ſubſtituting nature in its place; but each ſyſtem alike cuts up morality and virtue by the roots. *Whatever is, is right*, without qualification, is directly contradictory to the fact that evil ever entered the world at all, and of which truth nobody was more ſenſible than Pope himſelf, who was ſo fond of dealing out the appellations of knave and villain, words, I apprehend, without meaning, if *wrong* had never been committed: ſo that the axiom renders Johnſon's culpable repreſentation of Pope's epiſtolary ſatires, that he could not hope to mend the world, true indeed, as it could want no mending. Neverthelefs, every perſon of ſound piety and religion hopes and believes, that through the controuling providence of God, which ſaid to the ſea, *Thus*

far

far ſhalt thou go, and no farther, all diſorders will be at length rectified, and that *all will finally be right*. Indeed Johnſon's morality, interſperſed through his biography, is of an indifferent, vulgar, worldly, and warped into a ſuſpicious caſt, that ſeemed to confute Pope's poſition. But indeed, as ſays Shakeſpeare's Timon, thoſe who haſtily blame perſons for being captivated with the blandiſhments of pleaſure, are ſuch as never experienced it. So it may be alleged, that Johnſon wrote his rigid precepts of morality, when a bulk, not a ſopha, was his ſeat of reſt: that he had been "a ſlave, "whom Fortune's tender art with fa-"vour never claſped." For as adverſity is excellently denominated a ſchool, ſo is proſperity a ſnare. However, a man of his underſtanding ſhould, at all times, have reſerved *amo meliora* for an apology, and not have left the Heathen Stoics, men who, on account of their ſelf-denial, deſerve the appellation of natural Chriſtians, the palm of moral philoſophy.

Of paradoxes, the former part of the twenty-

twenty-ſecond verſe of the third chapter of Geneſis ;—*And the Lord God ſaid, behold the man* (the woman is not mentioned) *is become as one of us, to know good and evil*— ſeems to preſent one. Yet may it not be reſolved in this manner ?—That before their fall, Adam and Eve knew not, were unacquainted with the mixed condition enſuing to the world, having experienced nothing but good, unſophiſticated with evil. As to the latter part of this verſe, *and now leſt he put forth his hand, and take alſo of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever*, it is beyond my reſolution ; for to interpret it that mankind, how brutal ſoever they are, and *like the beaſts that periſh*, will not be immortal ; or that the wicked will not be ſo, though a ſeemingly deſirable thing, and *that many are called, but few are choſen*, with ſome few other texts, are to be underſtood in ſuch a ſenſe, ſeems raſh and heterodox. And that Mrs. Piozzi, in her expreſſion, that our author's excellence was beyond that of periſhable beings, alluded to that of Scripture, *like the beaſts that periſh*, is a preſumption ſtill leſs juſtifiable. I may here obſerve,

that

that one Francis Oſborn, has a curious remark on the words, *The ſeed of the woman ſhall bruiſe the ſerpent's head*;—that the meaning might be, that he who ſhould do it, would be born of a woman only.

"They (ſays Waller) who think themſelves in danger, and they who have nothing left, can never give freely," ſeems, in the latter part, defective; the tenour ſeeming to require, *they who have nothing left, are never afraid of giving freely*.

"Couſin Waller, I muſt talk to thoſe men in their own way," ſhews Cromwell in his true colours,—that of a villainous hypocrite, which ſome perſons have endeavoured to diſguiſe, as if he thought himſelf, or at length perſuaded himſelf, that he was ſincere in his affectation of piety, making, as ſays *Proſpero, in the Tempeſt*, "a liar of his memory. Religious cant conſiſts in veſting common modern ideas in antiquated ſcriptural phraſeology; in changing the eſſence and unaffected ſpirit of religion, into ſenſeleſs words and prepoſterous

ſentences,

ſentences, like affected diſtinctions of ſquare-toed ſhoes, multiplicity of buttons and long pockets, and is burleſque and mockery. Of the engines of tyranny, there is none more efficacious and grating than creating laws to reſtrain others, and to be diſpenſed with by the enactors. And this glaring policy it was that critically framed *the ſelf-denying ordinance*, pretended to reſtrain members of Parliament from holding commiſſions in the army under the cloak of patriotiſm, which Cromwell himſelf was notoriouſly to break through, ſeize the very command of the army after having virtually commanded it already, murder garriſons, and trample on the nation. Yet, becauſe mankind are always to be fools, a wiſe axiom of Pope, we have lately ſeen triumphant, hypocritical patriotiſm as prepoſterouſly impudent as Cromwell's, holden out in the practices concerning the Iriſh commercial treaty, which was reſpectively repreſented as injurious to both kingdoms, and both were fools enough to gulp down the matchleſs paradox hewn out with a cleaver, ſo coarſely as to have ſtuck in the throat of any other

people

people on earth; the offspring of which is ſuch an headleſs monſter as the world has never before ſeen, and as cannot poſſibly live long; but will probably, e'er it die, diſgorge, like the dragon in the Revelation, a deluge that will ſhake one or other of the kingdoms to the foundation. If appearances may be depended on, the monarch of France alſo may experience the fruits of paradoxes, and ſee duplicity brought home to his own door; ſo dangerous it is to foſter a ſerpent, dandle fire, and raiſe the devil in ſport. Nevertheleſs, if he was outwitted by the fanatics of America, his conceſſions to the Proteſtants will ſtamp him the real patriot of mankind.

Our author mentions Cromwell with a moderation that I ſhould not have expected. It may indeed be alleged, according to Mr. Boſwell, that it is of little importance of what tyrant-conqueror the ſuceſſors bear ſway; and that the nation, in acquieſcing in Oliver's uſurpation, of evils choſe the leaſt. But of theſe evils this arch hypocrite has been the principal cauſe, who had regularly

gularly conducted things to ſuch a ſituation, that the nation was obliged either to admit a notorious uſurpation, or be plunged into utter confuſion and ruin. Cromwell ſeems to have ſurpaſſed Cæſar, in that, as Warburton obſerves, the ſpirit of the nation was at the higheſt when he ſubdued it; whereas Rome was enervated with luxury; and there had been a perpetual dictator before.

By the way, Sylla's reſignation, his character conſidered, ſeems one of the moſt extraordinary events in hiſtory; and to have deſignated him ambitious and ſavage, two qualities uſually united, as he had been the greateſt, becauſe the wiſeſt man of the three, exhibits a mighty proof of the vanity of all human things; and that on the mind, even the love of power, the laſt infirmity of greater minds, though the greateſt of all are ſuperior ſtill, unleſs indeed for the opportunity of doing good. But the underminers of ſtates may be neceſſitated to perſiſt, from the danger or impoſſibility of retreating. Thoſe poſſeſs not the moſt

exalted ideas who cannot really believe, that cannot be perſuaded that Diogenes preferred his tub, whence he might expatiate on the orbs of heaven, to the throne, tottering, whereon Alexander ſurveyed the ſubject earth.

Cromwell effected by diſſimulation that which Cæſar accompliſhed by largeſs; and may perhaps be conſidered as a cunninger politician than the other. In public and private courage and conduct, they were equal and wonderful: but Cromwell had nothing but ſly art, to oppoſe to Cæſar's oratory and literature. Farther; Cæſar was liberal; Cromwell was mean; and would not at a leſs propitious time have riſen higher than a methodiſt parſon. Cæſar collected diſſipation into monarchy; Cromwell debaſed monarchy into tyranny.—Their ambition and narrow failure of a crown, had a very remarkable affinity; and perhaps after all, they both deſerve the name of cowards, for ſtanding ſhilly ſhally within reach of that for which their ſouls longed. There was alſo another reſemblance in their warfare: that had Pom-

pey's

pey's army had patience, Cæſar would probably have been ruined; and that had not the Scotch army of ſaints been induced by ſecond fight to engage Cromwell, he would probably have been reduced by famine.

On the rebellion, Francis Oſborn remarks, that the Jeſuits, always working by indirect methods, landed it in Preſbyterian bottoms, and in thoſe of the Anabaptiſts; who naturally, he ſays, diſapprove of all government whatſoever. And he obſerves in the another place, that the Arminians are to Papiſts, juſt what ſcallions are to onions; that is, they are only not quite ſo ſtrong. As to the Puritans, though candour ſhould be always embraced, it muſt be acknowledged, that they joined with the Papiſts in the time of James II. ſo that even the moſt incongruous extremes coin ided in the intention of overturning the golden medium of the church of England. So excellent indeed is the medium in all things, though nothing on earth will be ever free from imperfection, that, corrupt and perverſe as is the lot of humanity, even reli-

gion itſelf muſt not be carried to extremes. In fact, common ſenſe, and the light of nature, have never been totally obſcured by religion and prieſtcraft, which, by ſuperſtition, monaſtic monopolization, &c. has even threatened the extirpation of mankind. For, among the manifold contrivances of Providence, He has ſo conſtituted things, that evils deſtroy themſelves; and, when outrageous, become their own cure; deſpots who have laid waſte the world, a Cæſar, and a Kouli Khan, at length fell by a bodkin. Again, when knavery is univerſal, ſuch a ſyſtem is in a manner the ſame with univerſal honeſty; becauſe all cheating, one another in their turns, has a ſimilar effect to nobodys' cheating. When the Jewiſh prieſts were ſo numerous that all were about to become prieſts, as all people are now becoming Jeſuits, a reform became abſolutely neceſſary, and deſired by the prieſthood itſelf. As the effect of all being prieſts, (the remark may be extended alſo to other trades,) beſides the impoveriſhment of the prieſthood, and its virtual annihilation, there being no ponds in the ſea, muſt be that of depopulating

depopulating and laying waſte the world. Moreover, an overgrown, aged prieſthood and myſtery, are in danger of letting in the light through their chinks, and enable the laity to get a glimpſe of the penetralia; whereby, becoming witneſſes of ſome chicanery, they may erroneouſly conclude of the ſubſtance of religion itſelf, and ſo perhaps indeed paſs from ſuperſtition to the meeting extreme of ſcepticiſm and irreligion; the circumſtance that renders the inculcation of hard myſtery ſo dangerous. And thus, in regard to evils undoing themſelves; when tyranny, or chicanery of any kind, have threatened total deſtruction, the elaſtic *vis inſita* inherent, notwithſtanding its baſeneſs, in human nature, buoying up in ſtrong minds, has always availed more or leſs to pierce the veil drawn over the eyes of the ſimple bulk of mankind, and fanned a ſpark both of political and ſpiritual liberty, and preſerved from annihilation the human race; an event, I will not however pronounce on, whether to be deprecated or wiſhed. It is the natural conſequence of inſufferable oppreſſion, notwithſtanding the unprincipled

careleſſneſs, cowardice, and ſelfiſhneſs of mankind; that the pent tide of the people forced upon its banks, ruſhes over and bears down all before it. When the blood is driven on the heart by deſpair, the heart muſt repel it, or death enſues. Says Oſborn, "keep "reaſon always in your eye, which ſhould "never be loſt ſight of in any worldly ac-"tion, and be but eclipſed in things relat-"ing to religion." He has withal a very ſarcaſtic ſtroke at the Pope; "whoſe in-"fallible holineſs, (ſays he,) has announced "himſelf a fool on record, in puniſhing "Galileo for aſſerting the truth of there "being antipodes."

"His (Waller's) opinion concerning the "duty of a poet, is contained in this de-"claration, — that he would blot from "his works any line that did not contain "ſome motive to virtue." And his motto is

Non ego mordaci diſtrinxi carmine quenquam.

Perhaps it is not eaſy to conceive, how love-verſes ſhould, in every line, inculcate virtue

virtue in its common acceptation. Poſſibly, as *virtus* imports *valour*, ſo, by virtue, Waller might mean gallantry in love. This gallantry is, it ſeems, Gothic, which gives me an opportunity of noticing this paſſage of this Oſborn, who was one of the queer dogs:—" If any lady be furiouſly enamour-
" ed of you, whoſe fortune cannot corre-
" ſpond for the troubles incident to mar-
" riage, (which, God knows, are not a few),
" venture the loſs of her rather than your-
" ſelf: it being the higheſt degree of folly
" to hang an indiſſolvable padlock on your
" future hopes, only to ſave a wenches'
" longing." He relates, that when King James I. partook of a huge treat made for him by Sir John Forteſcue, " his Majeſty
" made a jeſt of it, and departing, let a f—
" in the porch." Pardon me, reader.

The moſt frequent objection to Waller's verſification is, not only uſing *do*, but accenting it: otherwiſe both *do* and *ed* need not be excluded diverſified poetry. His verſe is rather ſmooth than vigorous:—

" Waller was ſmooth; but Dryden taught to join
" The varying pauſe, the full-reſounding line,
" The long majeſtic march, and energy divine."

As to ſacred poetry, mine, and our author's opinion, not coinciding, his idea of poetry that it is uſeleſs and improper for thoſe purpoſes which are alone worthy of high regard, having been engendered by ſuperſtition, I ſhall paſs to a ſtricture on the expreſſion, *paſſed the zenith*, which I think not apt. The alluſion is to noon. *Zenith* conveys a true idea of *height*, therefore the *zenith of glory* is well, but does not with ſo much propriety deſignate a ſtage of the progreſſion of life. The variation of the zenith is the ſame, day and night, during the twenty-four hours, ſometimes indeed called the day; but compared with a man's life, it is beſt conſidered as the time only the ſun is above the horrizon, or at moſt, from the break of day till its cloſe; the different points of the day's revolution correſponding with the ſtages of life. Be that as it may, Fenton's allowance of only twenty years of maturity to man's life, eſpecially

applied

applied to Waller who wrote well till eighty-two, ſeems too ſmall.

After an effort of exalted ſtile reſpecting religion,—" ſuch as it is, it is known al-" ready," is a fall off not very intelligible.

Having noticed ſeveral obſervations of Mr. Francis Oiborn, I ſhall take this opportunity of the mention of religion, to quote from him ſomething of importance, the following preſumptions of the exiſtence of a Deity:—" Nor are we" (as to ourſelves, in regard to the ſphere of our own underſtandings) " totally deſtitute of a ſha-" dow of Omniſciency, ſince, from a far lower " ſituation than heaven, we are able, at one " glance to overlook a whole city, and by " a ſingle trumpet to alarum an army. Yet " our ſenſes are capable to receive no ſmall " augmentation from the aſſiſtance of art. " An infallible argument that the perfec-" tion of theſe qualities does not determine " in the perſon of any creature; but is " ſomething paramount to all that hath yet " riſen within the compaſs of our experi-

" ence,

" ence, it being impoſſible but that a ſu-
" perlative power ſhould reſt ſomewhere.
" Nor can we be competent judges of the
" motions of God, that have nothing to
" meaſure by but ſenſe, much too weak to
" diſcern the motion of a ſhadow, or the
" growth of a plant, till time hath rendered
" them apparent. Wherefore, we are far
" unable to comprehend the lines of Provi-
" dence, imperceptible to every intelligence
" but that of Him who has the ſole diſpo-
" ſure of all things; it not being probable
" that man ſhould comprehend the out-
" goings of God, whilſt he is unable to give
" any reaſon for his own." And thus (he might have added) whilſt according to the doleful ditty, " As in beginning was, is " now, and ſo ſhall be for evermore." We dream that the world and things will al-ways continue in their preſent ſtate, and fools and knaves hope it alſo: we may ſud-denly find the day of judgment at our doors, as a thief in the night.

Waller, whoſe *life* is written with ability and impartiality, ſeems to have deſerved

the

the title of a Vicar of Bray. And let me defend our author againſt the cenſure of mixing politics with literature; though not of varniſhing over King Charles's illegal meaſures; I think with Hume, that ſomething may be juſtly alleged for them. Nor, on the other hand, of frittering away thoſe of the dregs of the faction. A biographer was profeſſedly to write an account of the the lives of the poets, and conſequently of their circumſtances and characters.

But I think he has made rather a jumble, by giving a partial account of their writings, in the courſe of their lives; and that the work would have been more perfect, if, in proceeding with their hiſtories, he had only mentioned the titles and dates of their writings, and reſerved his critiques by themſelves.

POMFRET.

OF this placid poet, who is dispatched laconically, the lines that most pleased me were the e cn pleasing melancholy ;—

" The sweetest music to the grove we owe,
" Is mournful Philomel's melodious woe."

DORSET.

THE adage, that *the elder brother has the eſtate, and the younger the ſenſe*, is not well founded. That the younger ſhould have moſt learning, and the elder moſt genius, might be expected; but both ſeems accidental. It is indeed very meritorious in perſons born to opulence, to be at the pains of acquiring knowledge. For young perſons qualified by fortune and genius for merriment and conviviality, to leave the flowery paths of ſenſe for the thorny ones of ſcience; to quit, in ſpite of the taunts of the gay and the amorous, the flowing bowl for Coke and Lyttelton, and the ſmiles of beauty for triangles and parallelograms, ſeems almoſt marvellous; yet conſtellations of literary nobles, as Roſcommon, Hallifax, Sheffield, Dorſet, &c. have appeared.

JOHN PHILIPS.

WE underſtand that Philips preſents us with the huſks, but makes an apology for the kernels of poetry: that in his *Blenheim* we find the lumber and dim windows, but not the magnificence and good cheer of ancient caſtles; that we view the quarries of ſtones and dwarfs, but look in vain for the giants and enchantments of Shakeſpeare and Milton: that, according to Swift's caricature of Dryden compared with Pindar, we have an enormous helmet to contemplate, in which the head is almoſt loſt. It is not to be doubted, that critics pick up many of their notices from converſation, &c. ſtill they muſt not be deprived of the merit of them; and Johnſon's criticiſm, though ſevere, on John Philips, has rarely appeared to advantage. The *Splendid Shilling* is a very pleaſing burleſque of the beſt, that is the grave kind, conſiſting in the inveſtiture of trifling ſubjects in pompous ſtile; the other, the putting off a

ſublime

ſublime ſubject in mean ſtile, that is the ludicrous kind, being inferior. Miller's criticiſm, that the poem on cyder is really inſtructive in the art, though I apprehend King's, if it was King's, poetical receipt to make an apple-pye to be a more practical treatiſe; reminds me of the ſame queſtion concerning Virgil's *Georgics*, which, even in England, I think not a uſeleſs treatiſe on agriculture, if well underſtood even now when the ſcience is in ſo improved a ſtate; but I am entirely at a loſs to underſtand Virgil's caution not to ſow wheat before May, (Georg. I. l. 225.) if *Maiæ* means May, leſt the ears ſhould be empty; an idea that, were the ſpring the time of ſowing wheat in Italy, which, however, ſeems from the context not to have been the caſe, contradicts all experience, late-ſown corn producing the thinneſt and worſt grain.

WALSH.

WALSH.

IF it is conſidered that this poet was a gallant, and attached to Gothic affections, he finds more quarter than might have been expected; but at laſt receives this kick,—"He is known more by his familiarity "with great men, than by any thing done "or written by himſelf."

It is, however, probable from that very circumſtance, that he had ſomething in him engaging; unleſs drinking and gaming, &c. were the accompliſhments that in thoſe days obtained the notice of the great.

As our author ends his firſt volume like a Parthian, we ſhall ſee him enter on the ſecond like a crab; I mean his Latin idiom of beginning a ſentence at the latter end, with *of*, as at the commencement of the life of Dryden.

DRYDEN.

DRYDEN.

" An horrid ſtillneſs firſt invades the ear."

" DEATH is alſo privation; yet who
" has made any difficulty of aſſign-
" ing to death a dart, and the power of
" ſtriking?"

Wretched quibbling and contradiction this, for contradiction-ſake! Death is indeed repreſented as an allegorical perſon in ſcripture, &c. ſome kinds of which very juſtly give an idea of ſtriking; but a negation of ſounds invading the ear is mere nonſenſe in terms, like *lucus a non lucendo*.

" No grain of ſenſe does in one line appear,
" Thy words big bulks of boiſt'rous bombaſt bear.
" With noiſe they move, and from play'rs mouths rebound,
" When their tongues dance to thy words' empty ſound.
" By thee inſpir'd the rumbling verſes roll,
" As if that rhyme and bombaſt lent a ſoul.

As Dryden's outrageous effuſions, however mixed up with indigeſted nonſenſe and

puns, could not but have value; ſo we have here an excellent deſcription of bombaſt, and afterwards another vigorous ſpecimen of indignant ſatire;—

" From breaths of fools thy commendation ſpreads;
" Fame ſings thy praiſe with mouths of loggerheads;
" With noiſe and laughing each thy fuſtian greets,
" 'Tis clapt by quires of empty-headed cits."

In which we perceive that coarſe expreſſions, ſuch as Juvenal adopted, are thoſe for hacking and hewing, for which a cleaver is much better fitted than a poliſhed inſtrument.

" This, as Lamotte relates himſelf to
" have heard, was the real practice of the
" poet."

This is an odd relation, that Dryden ſhould think a fit of the gripes neceſſary to deſcribe a hero in love. Indeed a metaphyſician, or a methodiſt, might benefit the ſpirit by purging off the groſs parts. Soon after we find our author calling his father an old bookſeller. He was hardly always old;—

old ;—though perſons have been ſaid to have been born drunk.

" —As to retire for quiet to an infallible " church.'

This is a ſentence worthy at leaſt of as wiſe a theologian as our author, who himſelf was always old and antiquated in religious matters. An *infallible church* that (he might have added) annihilates concern and thought, and which is the ſiſter of a kind of inverſe ſcepticiſm that is to lead men blindfold to heaven. As to what he adds, that every artifice was then uſed to ſhew Popery in its faireſt form ; were the Proteſtants (probably three fourths of the nation) idle, and did they not ſhew her in her fouleſt form ? " It is natural to hope, " that a comprehenſive, is likewiſe an ele- " vated ſoul ; and that whoever is wiſe, is " alſo honeſt." By *wiſe*, is meant *knowing* ; for, doubtleſs, every *wiſe* man, in the true ſenſe of the word, is honeſt ; *rogue and fool*, notwithſtanding the large portion of the

world comprehended in thoſe terms, being certainly ſynonimous.

" In this volume is compriſed the well-
" known Ode on St. Cecilia's Day, which,
" as appeared by a letter communicated to
" Dr. Birch, he ſpent a fortnight in com-
" poſing and correcting." Dr. Warton, I think, ſays that he wrote it at one ſitting: ſtill, the correction included, both accounts may be true, though Dryden was not wont to reviſe, and the piece is not correct.

As to the colloquial dullneſs of Dryden, who wrote ſo freely and careleſsly, and was agreeable to the great, his modeſty might embaraſs his converſation: but it is not improbable, that he thought it beneath his dignity to open in common company. If we may believe Lord Cheſterfield, the Duke of Ormond was the moſt innoffenſive and weakeſt of men; an account probably exaggerated.

The expreſſion, *holy butcher*, however ridiculous,

diculous, is a good burleſque appellation for the operators of barbarous and idiot ſuperſtition, in the execution of which, *ipſa pulcherrima, Dido* held the bowl; and Cicero, of whom, with all his celebrity, it is dubious whether vanity or ſuperſtition rendered him the greater fool, was as contemptible as any one. If Dryden and Johnſon alſo were poſſeſſed of ſuperſtition, it was not of a ſanguinary caſt, though both of them were poſſeſſed of a degree of ſavageneſs; nor ought we to pronounce the original uncorrected tenets of the Church of Rome erroneous. Indeed Dryden and Johnſon had ſome conſiderable reſemblances; and the ſultan Johnſon ſignified from his chair in the iſle of Sky, his project of keeping a ſeraglio) or a harem, we ſhould rather ſay) with no leſs dignity than the monarch Dryden iſſued edicts from his ſeat in the balcony at Will's. *But there is no reaſon for ſuppoſing that Johnſon diſbelieved the religion which he only entertained thoughts of diſobeying. He forgot his duty rather than diſowned it. His tendency to being a Turk was the effect of levity, negligence, and looſe converſation, with a deſire of accom-*

modating himſelf to the corruption of the times, by venturing to be wicked as far as he durſt. When he profeſſed himſelf a convert to Mahometaniſm, he did not pretend to have received any new conviction of fundamental doctrines. I hope the reader will excuſe this paraphraſe of the Doctor's apology for Dryden.

Three hundred verſes for 12,000l. is juſt ſixpence a verſe, which, according to the preſent rate of money, would be, I ſuppoſe, ſomewhat more than a ſhilling; and the 20l. which Milton was to receive firſt and laſt for *Paradiſe Loſt*, would be now perhaps 80l.

" *It was more eligible to go wrong with one* " *than right with the other*," is ſurely a dangerous apophthegm, ſomewhat reſembling the theological poſition, that men ought to ſpeak alike, whatever they think.

" To write *con amore*, with fondneſs for " the employment, with perpetual touches " and retouches, with unwillingneſs to take

" leave of his own idea, and an unwearied
" purſuit of unattainable perfection."

Certainly not. Yet of moſt writers, a pocket-volume, in a cloſe ſtile and compacted thought, is, in the preſent oppreſſion of books, much preferable to a folio. If one's firſt thoughts are the beſt, it is by chance; and they are like a lucky throw at dice; and he who depends on them for his reputation, will probably looſe it. The mind, like a hampered net, is ſeldom at once diſentangled; beſides that the expreſſion is nearly always improvable.

" He could not, like Milton and Cowley,
" have made his name illuſtrious merely
" for his learning."

It was hardly poſſible for a man continually ſcribbling, to dive into the depths of ſcience. But indeed it is difficult to collect from our author, whether Dryden was learned or not. He ſeems to allow him an intuitive knowledge; a wide range, though he kept the high road: repreſents his li-

terature, as either obvious, ſuperficial, or erroneous; as knowing things, but not books; as hatching the egg without ſitting on it.

" More examples of more modes of com-
" poſition" is aukwardly expreſſed.

" A tranſlator is to be like his author;
" it is not his buſineſs to excel him."

This aſſertion ſeems hypothetical. As a tranſlator will never equal ſome beauties, ſhould he not compenſate by ſoftening ſome blemiſhes? Pope, however cunningly our author wards off the objection, may perhaps be juſtly blamed for refining on Homer's ſimplicity. Be that as it may, he, quality and quantity taken together, is probably the beſt tranſlator that ever exiſted. On Ovid's *Sappho to Phaon*, he has eſpecially much improved in the pathetic, in which he alſo much excelled his maſter Dryden, and has avoided ſome puerilities. Addiſon, in his excellent ſpecimens of the *Metamorphoſes*, conforms to the turn both

of

of the thought and poetry, his Engliſh dancing to the Latin.

" Allegories drawn to great length will
" always break. Charles could not run
" continually parallel with David."

Might it not hence be concluded, that David or Charles were perſonifications? Is the poem of *Abſalom and Achitophel* properly an allegory, and not rather a parallel? Yet it cannot be eaſily ſuppoſed that our author did not know what an allegory is.

" The ſubject had likewiſe another in-
" convenience: it admitted little imagery
" or deſcription; and a long poem of mere
" ſentiment *eaſily* becomes tedious; though
" all the parts forcible, and every line kindles
" new rapture, the reader, if not relieved
" by the interpoſition of ſomething that
" ſooths the fancy, grows weary of admira-
" tion, and defers the reſt."

That *new raptures want ſomething to ſooth the fancy*, &c. will hardly bear. So long as great

great and freſh delights laſt, leſs are hardly required, an anticlimax of enjoyment. But, moreover, what is a ſtronger proof of the merit of a piece than its ſupplying repeated raptures? "O, 'tis too much for man, but "let it ne'er be leſs!" Whatever may be alleged for a truce of relief, few but envious perſons are diſpleaſed with being too much delighted. Beſides that, unity or uniformity is the perfection of a piece; when the mind has prepared itſelf to be ſoothed, wit may indeed be not acceptable; but when it is ſet for wit, wit is expected. *Eaſily* is in this quotation unmeaning, as *enough* and *ſufficiently* ſometimes in theſe *Lives*, uſed as the adjuncts of indifference or ill, is at beſt an unmeaning, and rather indeed an abſurd idiom, or low humour.

"Who can forbear to think of an en-
"chanted caſtle, with a wide moat and
"lofty battlements, walls of marble and
"gates of braſs, which vaniſhes at once
"into air, when the deſtined knight blows
"his horn before it?"

Somewhat

Somewhat like this, was the ſudden change in the nation in favour of prerogative, after the diſſolution of the parliament at Oxford; and indeed ſomething not unlike it has happened in theſe times.

" Perſonal reſentment, though no laud-
" able motive to ſatire, can add great force
" to general principles."

Much has been ſaid on both ſides concerning perſonal ſatire, which goes by the name of *lampoon*. It is certain that a perſon labouring under the injuries of power, has often no poſſibility of redreſs: in which caſe, let lawyers ſay what they will, reaſon will put in its claim, and even religion will not ſilence common ſenſe; and though a public robber may feel the force of general ſatire, a private oppreſſor muſt expect individual retaliation; a ſarcaſm muſt be to the ſufferer inſtead of an action, and a point of wit for a point of law. There is, however, little danger in libelling a poor man, who, were he able to make experiment of the law, would find it a whited ſepulchre.

Of

Of the ſtrictures, one on Brady, and the other on Trapp, the former contains a witticiſm of the direct kind, of which our author is ſparing; the other, one of thoſe dry ſarcaſms of which he was very fond. Both of theſe may be juſt: but he betrays a prejudice againſt blank verſe, which being profeſſedly the beſt vehicle of tragedy, cannot be improper for epic; and I have obſerved, that after having been for ſome time uſed to blank verſe, an unpropitious denomination, the jingle of rhyme has ſeemed to me childiſh.

"The works of Chaucer, upon which "this kind of rejuveneſcence has been be-"ſtowed, require little criticiſm."

Chaucer is no favourite with our author; but his wit was brilliant, and his humour powerful; too hoſtile to the chicanery of prieſtcraft for Johnſon, and very extraordinary at that time of day; but ſometimes indecent. Dryden is probably partial in ſetting *Palamon* and *Arcite*, on a level with the *Eneid*; yet Chaucer was a great genius,

and

and deemed the primo-genitor of Engliſh poetry. His *Flower and Leaf*, paſt over by the ſmoak-loving Johnſon, is charmingly modernized: the nineteen firſt lines in particular are ſo delightful, and contain ſo incomparable a ſketch of the beauty of Spring, that they ſhould charm all readers:

" Now turning from the wint'ry ſigns, the Sun
" His courſe exalted thro' the Ram had run;
" And, whirling up the ſkies, his chariot drove
" Thro' Taurus and the lightſome realms of love,
" Where Venus from her orb deſcends in ſhow'rs,
" To glad the ground, and paint the fields with flow'rs;
" When firſt the tender blades of graſs appear,
" And buds that yet the blaſt of Eurus fear,
" Stand at the door of life and doubt to cloath the year;
" Till gentle heat, and ſoft repeated rains
" Make the green blood to dance within their veins:
" Then, at their call, embolden'd out they come,
" And ſwell the gems and burſt the narrow room;
" Broader and broader yet their blooms diſplay,
" Salute the welcome ſun and entertain the day:
" Then from their breathing ſouls the ſweets repair
" To ſcent the ſkies and purge the unwholſome air;
" Joy ſpreads the heart, and with a gen'ral ſong
" Spring iſſues out, and leads the jolly months along."

" With the ſimple and elemental paſ-
" ſions, as they ſpring ſeparate in the mind,

" he

" he ſeems not much acquainted; and ſel-
" dom deſcribes them but as they are com-
" plicated by the various relations of ſo-
" ciety, and confuſed in the tumults and
" agitations of life." I queſtion if this is not as juſt a characteriſtic of himſelf as of Dryden, whom Congreve affirms to have been likewiſe humane, though he was impatient of rivalry and ſavage; for with cruelty and ſavageneſs to other writers, was Johnſon's tenderneſs combined.

" *I knew*, (ſays Dryden,) *that they were*
" *bad enough to pleaſe, even when I wrote*
" *them*," is the true *concordia diſcors* of wit. But why ſhould our author ſuppoſe that Dryden ſhould pleaſe himſelf with the fuſtian which he thus ſtigmatizes? What follows is not the dictate of nature, nor often of religion, but of the world, from which Johnſon was not emancipated, how much ſoever he was from the fleſh and the devil.

" He had more muſic than Waller, more
" vigour than Denham, and more nature
" than Cowley," is a broken appoſition.

Muſic

Muſic was Waller's excellence; vigour Denham's; but nature was not Cowley's.

" The haſtineſs of his productions might " be the effect of neceſſity; but his ſubſe- " quent neglect could hardly have any " other cauſe than impatience of ſtudy." Reviſions of paſt productions, muſt doubtleſs interrupt the compoſition of new; alſo, his readers had not to regret that their editions were ſuperſeded by others, and the vigorous racineſs of his genius did not ſtagnate in dregs, though his wit ſometimes ran foul. However, a remarkable inſtance of his diſlike of trouble, is his diſcovery in writing the latter part of his preface to his Juvenal, that he had not ſpelt *ſatire* right, and that, as he ſays, he thought it not worth while to look it over again to correct it. But I am inclined to think, that the etymology is *ſatyr*, from the ſatyrs.

" As theſe lines" *(of fourteen ſyllables)* " had their break on *cæſura*, always at the " eighth fyllable, it was thought, in time, " commodious to divide them; and qua-

" trains

" trains of lines, alternately conſiſting of
" eight and ſix ſyllables, make the moſt
" ſoft and pleaſing of our lyric meaſures;
" as,

" *Relentleſs Time, deſtroying power,*
" *Which ſtone and braſs obey;*
" *Who giv'ſt to ev'ry flying hour*
" *To work ſome new decay.*"

And when there is only one rhyme in the twenty-eight ſyllables, there is no other difference but the ranging them in two lines, or in four.

" In examining their propriety, it is to
" be conſidered, that the eſſence of verſe
" is regularity; and its ornament, variety."
An excellent, if a new obſervation.

" The Engliſh Alexandrine breaks its
" lawful bounds, and ſurpriſes the reader
" with two ſyllables more than he ex-
" pected."

Of this there is a fine inſtance in Pope's *Temple of Fame*;—

" Around

" Around a thouſand winged wonders fly,
" Borne by the trumpet's blaſt, and ſcatter'd thro' the ſky."

But there is in Dryden's Eneid an incomparable couplet, in which the Alexandrine is overtopped by a double one, or verſe of fourteen ſyllables ;—

" For thee the Ocean ſmiles, and ſmooths her wav'y breaſt,
" And Heav'n itſelf with more ſerene and purer light is
" bleſt."

And if a common verſe of ten had preceded in the ſame rhyme, it would have been a moſt beautiful climax of numbers, as thus,—

For thee Aurora ſpreads her ſpangled veſt,
For thee the Ocean ſmiles, and ſmooths her wav'y breaſt,
And Heav'n itſelf with more ſerene and purer light is bleſt.

Regular exactneſs in poetry, Virgil, whoſe verſification is admired by all, even affected to break. As to bracing of triplets, it deſtroys the ſurpriſe of the reader, who, if he has a quick eye and ready modulation of his voice, will perceive and expreſs them readily enough without mechanical aſſiſt-

ance. Our author has written this great poet's life with candour, analized his character with much ingenuity, and dismissed him with a genteel and just eulogium.

SMITH.

SMITH.

" 'TWERE to be wiſhed."—Indefinite and ſtrange, where the ſenſe might be grammatically and clearly aſcertained! *Were*, is continually uſed even by good authors, inſtead of *would be*; and here, *'Twere*, ſhould be, *It is*. However, this character of Smith, by Oldſworth, though doubtleſs ſtrained, is, in my opinion, a maſterpiece of panegyric.

Why are we not told the reaſon of Smith's name being really *Neal?*

How do, " His play" *(Phædra)* " pleaſed " the critics, and the critics only;" and, " the learned reject it as a ſchool-boy's " play;" and then again, " it is a ſcholar's " play," all agree?

Neal, alias *Smith*, alias *Rag*, was altogether an odd character. The nickname of Rag, puts me in mind of the frequent in-

attention to dreſs in ſtudious perſons. Thoſe of both ſexes are by their ruling regard naturally diverted from it. The female ſcholar is fonder of an elegant book than of a handſome gown, or perhaps than even of a handſome fellow: and a witty male one of a ſatire, than of a razor.

" I am diſappointed by that ſtroke of " death which has eclipſed the gaiety of " nations, and impoveriſhed the public ſtock " of harmleſs pleaſure!"

A horrid anticlimax! But that is not the worſt. Johnſon, after his effuſions of friendſhip to the manes of Garrick, could not hold back a Parthian kick of *harmleſs pleaſure*, and a piece of affected contempt, engendered perhaps by Garrick's compariſon of him with his own Proſpero in the *Rambler*, even in the contemplation of death. Indeed he always treated him in ſuch a manner as would tempt one to exclaim, *deliver me from ſuch a friend as Johnſon!* Perhaps, mortified with the indifferent reception of his *Irene*, he could not help transferring

the

the ill taſte of the people to diſguſt to Garrick, notwithſtanding his friend's efforts in its favour. It will be always remembered that popular, as were Pope and Johnſon, neither of them have furniſhed the theatre with a laſting play, that Dryden could make in a breath.

The ingenious author of the life of Chatterton obſerves, that " his imagination, like " Dryden's, was more fertile than correct ;" but, in the Doctor's opinion, Dryden's mind was not leſs correct than Pope's, though a victim to haſte.

DUKE'S

LIFE is a precious morſel, in which there is however a piece of wittineſs;—" an " age when he, that would be thought a " wit, was afraid to ſay his prayers."

KING'S

KING'S

LIFE ſhews his ſenſe, in preferring eaſe and an apple-pye, to the jargon and iniquity of law.

SPRAT

AFFORDS an inſtance of a man being furniſhed with a biſhoprick by means of his acquaintance with Cowley, who, himſelf, was almoſt ſtarving.

LORD

LORD HALLIFAX'S

LIFE declares the diſpoſition of the biographer to a Whig patron of literature, who is enumerated among the moſt eminent poets, yet is deſpiſed. One good line he nevertheleſs produced ;—

" He hung upon their rear, or lighten'd in their face."

PARNELL.

PARNELL.

"THE deſcription of *barrenneſs.*" I have often wondered at the ſmallneſs of Iriſh crops,—

"And half an acre's corn is half a ſheaf."

His verſes to Pope are very good.

GARTH.

GARTH

WAS a good poet, a good phyſician, and an honeſt man; and more than merely and paſſively ſo.

ROWE.

ROWE.

" THE character of *Lothario* ſeems to
" have been expanded by Richard-
" ſon into *Lovelace*; but he has excelled his
" original, in them oral effect of his fiction."

Caliſta's ſoliloquy is fine. *Clariſſa* is, I think, Richardſon's maſter-piece, unleſs Clementina's ſimplicity, ſuch as Richardſon alone was capable of drawing, gives the palm to the ſtory of *Grandiſon*, generally deemed beyond human nature; yet in accompliſhments, the *admirable Crichton* ſeems to have much exceeded him; but then little is ſaid of Crichton's virtues and the excellence of his heart.

As to Rowe's want of worth, it is to be hoped that he who knew how to ſeize the hearts of others, did not want one himſelf. As to his comedy of the *Biter*, though he had no teeth, ſtill he might be a match for barking critics. Our author gives ſo

high

high a character of his Lucan, that it ſeems inconſiſtent with his encomium of Pope's Homer, if it does not give Rowe the palm of tranſlation.

ADDISON.

ADDISON.

IT ſeems that Addiſon was at four ſchools; Ambroſbury, Saliſbury, Litchfield, and the Chartreux; enough to ſpoil the heads of moſt boys.

" But Addiſon, who ſeems to have had
" other notions of a hundred pounds, grew
" impatient of delay, and reclaimed his
" loan by an execution."

I am ſorry our author has acquainted us with this report of ſuch a man, but wiſh to think it a miſtake, or miſrepreſentation. But he takes a delight in depreciating Addiſon's friendſhip to Steele, and indeed all friendſhip; and enlarging on his rapaciouſneſs.

What inclines me to think this a miſtake, is, that he mentions an execution as the firſt, inſtead of laſt, legal proceſs; and,

moreover,

moreover, were it true, the motive might be good.

" Eſſay on the Georgicks, juvenile, ſu-
" perficial, and uninſtructive." Dryden was of a different opinion; and ſo am I:— A noble anticlimax.

" In this poem is a very confident and
" diſcriminative character of Spenſer, whoſe
" works he had never read." This ſeems odd. Addiſon compliments Cowley in an admirable line of ſeven feet, or fourteen ſyllables;—

" And plays in more unbounded verſe, and takes a nobler
" flight."

" While it was yet advanced no farther
" than the ſimile of the angel."

It is ſtriking to obſerve, the noble imitations to which two flights of the Pſalmiſt; *He came flying upon the wings of the wind*, XVIII. 10.—and *He maketh the clouds his chariot, and walketh upon the wings of the wind*,

CIV. 3. have given riſe: viz. the laſt couplet of this ſimile of Addiſon,—

" And pleas'd the Almighty's orders to perform,
" Rides in the whirlwind and directs the ſtorm."

In Dryden's *Ceyx and Alcyone*, from Ovid,—

" And now ſublime ſhe rides upon the wind."

Whence Pope borrowed,

" Not God alone in the ſtill calm we find,
" He mounts the ſtorm, and rides upon the wind."

Chatterton has,

" And rides upon the pinions of the wind."

And the ſtale rogue, Gray, has,

" With arms ſublime that float upon the air."

Addiſon and Pope ſeem to have had the XVIII. more eſpecially in view; but Shakeſpeaſe, in *Romeo and Juliet*, the CIV.

" Beſtrides the lazy-paced clouds,
" And ſails upon the boſom of the air."

The deſcription of this latter pſalm is ſublimer

limer than the other; but Sternhold has verſified the XVIII. much better, ſo that Dryden is ſaid to have beſtowed the higheſt commendation on his verſion, in which he ſeems to have been particularly inſpired to deſcribe the Supreme Being:—

" On cherubs and on cherubims
" Full royally he rode,
" And on the wings of mighty winds
" Came flying all abroad."

The opera of *Roſamond* has not ſo much reputation as it deſerves. Sir John Hawkins obſerves, that the villainy of Clayton's muſic preponderated againſt the elegance and humour of the poetry.

The character given of it by Tickell is very juſt, for it contains much fine thought in an enchanting variety of numbers, but is daſhed with Sir Truſty and Grideline.

" Addiſon was frighted leſt he ſhould be " thought a promoter of inſurrection; and " the line was liquidated to *Britons, at-* " *tend!*"

And yet, had Addiſon been a coward, he would have declined acceptance of the ſecretaryſhip to the regency, when Lord Bolingbroke's papers and office were ſealed up; a ſituation at a time that will always mark his political conſequence.

" That it" (the Drummer) " ſhould have " been ill received would raiſe wonder, " did not we daily ſee the capricious diſtri- " bution of theatrical praiſe,"—is a grain of Johnſon's own conſolation for himſelf. But the *Drummer*, though born before *Irene*, a nine days wonder, that had juſt time to cry, has ſurvived it.

" This cannot be ſaid of the few papers " entitled the *Whig Examiner*."

Our author does full juſtice to this paper, written by Addiſon in anſwer to the *Examiner*, compoſed by the Tories. Of the " ſuperiority of his wit" to that of his comrades in the Spectator, his part comparable to Diana's figure among her nymphs,

nymphs, or to a primary ſtar in a conſtellation, is a proof.

" It" (*Marriage*) " neither found them " nor made them equal." I cannot think that Dr. Johnſon would, on all occaſions, yield to blood ſo great a ſuperiority over brains, as is there implied. I am ſorry ſo often to mention his worldly leaven which yet he could cenſure in Dryden. And even as to worldly circumſtances; if his wife was a Counteſs,—Addiſon was a Secretary of State; an office at the ſhrine of which Lords can bow.

" Every reader ſurely muſt regret, that " theſe two illuſtrious friends, after ſo " many years paſt in confidence and endear- " ment, in unity of intereſt, conformity of " opinion, and fellowſhip of ſtudy, ſhould " finally part in acrimonious oppoſition."

Rather every reader will regret the entire miſrepreſentation of this affair;—not Steele, but Benſon, wrote the *Plebeian*; and more than that, Steele ſpoke in favour of the bill in ſpeeches now extant. It ſeems,

that Johnſon and Hawkeſworth, of whom no life is written, whilſt Lowths has furniſhed only a ſkeleton of a pamphlet, were indeed no more than external friends; and we do not find a zealous panygeric of Hawkeſworth after his death by Johnſon, like Addiſon's by Steele. And why did not Johnſon, who was a Tory, lament the acrimonious oppoſition of Oxford and Bolingbroke?

" He demanded to be the firſt name in " modern wit; and, with Steele to echo " him, uſed to depreciate Dryden, whom " Pope and Congreve defended againſt " him." *Spence.*

How true ſoever is this, Dryden, Pope, and Swift had all a keener or a rougher edge of wit, ſtrictly ſo called. Addiſon's was generally triturated into elegance; and as he inſinuates of great writers, his, like theirs, was Attic wit; that is, diſcourſes through which a ſoul of thought is diffuſed; and his thoughts, as well as ſtile, were expanded into ſentiment, and were indeed

ſeldom

ſeldom forcible or powerful. They were not plain drams, but made into punch;—calomel was his phyſic, and ſublimate was Dryden's. "Moſt wits will beſpatter a "friend when it bubbles," ſays Addiſon; but the tenderneſs of his nature expreſſed his ſeverity at all times, and he wore wit in a ſcabbard.

"Of very extenſive learning he has given "no proofs."

I do not pretend to judge of his learning. But in the *Spectator* only, he has exhibited conviction of his ſtudies being far from confined to the claſſics, ſtronger than has his biographer in the *Rambler*. What degrees of his own learning his Dictionary may be ſuppoſed to indicate, I cannot ſay. In the *Spectator*, a ſingle paper of Addiſon's is ſeen to contain a hiſtory of a ſcience in miniature. With what dexterity has he diſſected the Beau's head, and Coquette's heart; and Fielding ſpeaks of him as eminently learned.

"He had read, with critical eyes, the

" important volume of human life, and
" knew the heart of man from the depths
" of ſtratagem to the ſurface of affectation."

Then ſurely he was qualified for politics, if not for an official politician; and, from what is juſt after quoted from Steele, wanted nothing but courage to be a fluent ſpeaker. I agree with our author in the expreſſion, *the important volume of human life*, though Addiſon had not ſeen theſe *lives*. Important it is, but very diſagreeable; a volume that repels perſons of high intellect from its contemplation, to ſeek ſolace and entertainment in ſcenes of romance; that, after the reading of a page of that of which all pages are alike; and more than ever now, that the intercourſe of the world has been facilitated, and pride and ſelfiſhneſs deſtitute of a virtue, and poliſhed barbarity have become univerſal, bidding wiſe men withdraw themſelves to imaginary regions of peace and benevolence.

Of human life, vice is the current coin; and, as Dr. Kelley obſerves, " he who erects

" a ſure

" a ſure edifice, muſt ground it on the " fooliſhneſs of mankind." A certain foundation indeed, however the fantaſtic ſuperſtructures may vary.

" Of the next couplet, the firſt verſe, be-
" ing included in the ſecond, is therefore
" uſeleſs."

If the latter of theſe lines,

" 'Tis this that ſhakes our country with alarms,
" And gives up Rome a prey to Roman arms,"

is conſtrued into tautology, it is almoſt impoſſible to write a poem without it; amplification and even repetition being beauties in poetry. The new miniſtry could not have deſired a better concluſion, it tending to put a ſtop to the jars of party, and reconcile the nation to the peace.

" Who that ever aſked ſuccour from Bac-
" chus, was able to prevent himſelf from
" being enſlaved by his auxiliary."

What is meant by *his auxiliary*, I know not.

not. It is reported of the two friends, that Steele, who certainly had pleaſantry, would entertain the company till he grew mellow; and that then Addiſon would take up the converſation. Generous liquors are of ſervice to conſtitutions whoſe fluids want acceleration.

" His delight was more to excite merri-
" ment than deteſtation; and he detects
" follies rather than crimes;" in which he alſo complied with his genius, more Horation than Juvenalian.

" He has ſaid, not very judiciouſly, in
" his character of Waller,"

" Thy verſe could ſhew e'en Cromwell's innocence,
" And compliment the ſtorm that bore him hence.
" Oh! had thy Muſe not come an age too ſoon;
" But ſeen great Naſſau on the Britiſh throne,
" How had his triumph glitter'd in thy page."

" What is this but to ſay, that he who
" could compliment Cromwell, had been
" the proper poet for King William."

Not to cavil at *had been*, for *would have been*,

been, it ſeems that our author, when he wrote this, entertained a tenderneſs for the Protector, our liberties and religion, though William and Mary, like Brutus, were conſtrained to ſacrifice filial duty to patriotiſm. Indeed tender minds are unfit and incapacited for public affairs in general, even for the office of a juſtice of peace. Be that as it may, the ſentiment of Addiſon, in theſe lines, was but this: *If thy verſe could ſhew ſuch an uſurper as Cromwell in a favourable light, in what bright colours wouldeſt thou have painted King William!* The firſt couplet ought not to be taken literally; it meaning no more than that Waller threw a glory on Cromwell, not that Addiſon intended a compariſon between him and William; and all this Johnſon very well knew.

" That longs to *launch* into a nobler ſtrain."

Be the metaphor good or bad, the fabricator ſoon after *galloped*, *ſung*, or *launched* himſelf into a place of three hundred a-year.

" It is not eaſy to paint in ſong, or to
" ſing in colours."

Our

Our author here ſtrikes at the root of metaphor with a blunder ſtolen from Addiſon himſelf, in his remarks on a letter of Lord Bolingbroke. Poetry and Painting are ſiſter arts: the buſineſs of both being deſcription, they may be reciprocally uſed to figure and illuſtrate each other. Our author himſelf has theſe words, Vol. I. p. 235.—" To put theſe materials to *poeti-*
" *cal uſe*, is required an imagination capa-
" ble of *painting nature*, and realizing fic-
" tion." Every one can produce a hundred inſtances of metaphor more open to ridicule than this. Two pages ago, he talked of a *broken metaphor*. *What*, ſays a ſmart, *is a metaphor a faggot, or a fiddle-ſtick?* By the way, *broken*, is a metaphorical epithet affixed to *metaphor*.

An attention to ſuch hyper-criticiſms would reduce all writings to lees. And it ſeems (ſee the ſequel) extraordinary that an angel, of the agency of which kind of beings we have little or no idea, ſhould in driving a ſtorm, too much reſemble a General's conducting a battle for a ſimile.

" For

" For not only Cato is vanquiſhed by " Cæſar, but the treachery and perfidiouſ- " neſs of Syphax prevails over the honeſt " ſimplicity of Juba; and the ſly ſubtlety " and diſſimulation of Portius over the ge- " nerous frankneſs and openheartedneſs of " Marcus," *Dennis.*

But how does all this end? In favour of the meritorious perſons: and, the fate of Cato excepted, or rather the triumph of Cæſar, ſuicide being holden heroic by the Romans, the cataſtrophe was in a manner happy: on the whole, it is of a mixed nature. The ſoliloquy of Cato is an imitation of Hamlet; and perhaps Hamlet's was derived from Job, chap. iii. v. 17, 18, &c.

" An inſtructor, like Addiſon, was now " wanting (to precede the great Johnſon) " whoſe remarks being ſuperficial, might " be eaſily underſtood; and being juſt, " might prepare the mind for more attain- " ments"—(for the ſeſquipedalia of our author. Addiſon had the art of ſmoothing learning, by avoiding technical and hard

terms,

terms, and captivating in a neat diſhabille.

I may obſerve, that in all nice explanations, words ſhould be uſed in their ſtrict, proper ſenſe, when poſſible; a figure of ſpeech being the adoption of one ambiguity to explain another. Though Johnſon deals out the praiſe of his predeceſſor eſſayiſt with a rather grudging hard, his character of him is altogether juſt, and not uncandid; and more favourable to his unaffected poetry than has been the general opinion thereof; and whatever ſuggeſtions he may have thrown out elſewhere, the *Spectator* will always have more readers than the *Rambler*, which, weighty as is its matter, perhaps falls ſhort in animation and allurement, of the *Adventurer*. I am inclined to think that the Spectators have had more readers than the writings of Pope, or any whatſoever of their ſtanding.

HUGHES.

HUGHES.

"HE judged ſkilfully enough of his own intereſt."

From what follows, it appears that this is ironical—Hughes was a Whig.

I ſhould like to know if the Doctor himſelf knew what he meant by Mr. Duncombe's "*blameleſs elegance*."

"The character of his genius I ſhall "tranſcribe from the correſpondence of "Swift and Pope."

Knowing the juſt ſtigma inflicted by Horace, *mediocribus poetis*, this choice of fixing Hughes's character cannot but be conſidered as injurious. It does not clearly appear what Swift meant by ſaying "he is too great a poet for me," which taken by itſelf might be deemed a compliment, and was the truth. Swift is no better than a dog-

grel

grel poet ; and Pope might have recollected that himſelf could not write a play. The character, it is true, of an *honeſt man*, is certainly highly eſtimable, and ſuch an one as Hughes found the value of when on his death bed, when literary ſucceſs was put in the ſcale with religious confidence. Our author remarks, that his " reputation was " ſo far advanced, that the public began to " pay reverence to his name." And he may be juſtly ranked with the ſecond-rate genius's, ſuch as Steele, Congreve, Prior, and even Addiſon ; and his contemners, Swift and Pope. There is a beautiful groupe of verſes at the end of the fourth act of the Siege of Damaſcus, which were greatly reliſhed by Quin :

" Think that ye all to certain triumph move ;
" Who falls in fight, yet meets the prize above ;
" There, in the gardens of eternal ſpring,
" While birds of paradiſe around you ſing,
" Each with his blooming beauty by his ſide,
" Shall drink rich wines that in full rivers glide,
" Breathe fragrant gales o'er fields of ſpice that blow,
" And gather fruits immortal as they grow :
" In bliſs extatic, your whole powers employ,
" And ev'ry ſenſe be loſt in ev'ry joy."

I will

I will conclude the life of Hughes with noticing a very good obſervation of his on compoſing :—that when a piece has lain by for a while, the author, whoſe mind the thoughts have ſomewhat, but not entirely relinquiſhed, will be enabled to judge of them himſelf impartially, and to reviſe them with advantage, eſpecially to reform obſcurities.

SHEFFIELD,

IN his anſwer both to King William and the prieſt, ſhewed a blunt honeſty; but I do not underſtand the latter about tranſubſtantiation; literature, though not Milton, is indebted to him as a noble ſtudent.

PRIOR.

PRIOR.

"HE was perhaps willing enough to "leave his birth unſettled, in hope, "like Don Quixotte, that the hiſtorian of "his actions might find him ſome illuſtri- "ous alliance."

This does not well agree with his own epithet, "Nobles and Heralds,"—which breathes a ſpirit of bravado againſt anceſtry: and, in my opinion, the creator is more eſtimable than the inheritor of grandeur; nothing beyond exemption from idiotiſm being neceſſary for the latter.

"There was now a call for writers, who "might convey intelligence of paſt abuſes," &c.

At the time theſe *lives* were written, there ſeemed to be a call for writers to explore the reaſon why all the world almoſt had conſpired againſt a nation which had ſpent

BAYERISCHE STAATS- BIBLIOTHEK MÜNCHEN

its blood and treaſures in defence of the rights of mankind.

" Whatever Prior obtains above medio-
" crity, ſeems the effect of ſtruggle and
" toil. He has many vigorous, but few
" happy lines; he has every thing by pur-
" chaſe, and nothing by gift; he had no
" *nightly viſitations* of the muſe; no infuſions
" of ſentiment or felicities of fancy."

It requires ſuch a judge as Dr. Johnſon to make theſe diſcriminations; who, on the whole, allows Prior wit, art, and laboured metre, but not genuis: but if he had not the gift of poetical ſleep, he had a conſiderable ſhare in procuring repoſe to Europe, though he is unwilling to grant him either ſentiment or paſſion. Henry and Emma made me weep. And, he being both correct and eaſy, the former admitted by Johnſon, the latter by others, elegance muſt be confeſſed to be the reſult.

" In his preface to *Solomon*, he propoſes
" ſome improvements, by extending the
" ſenſe

" ſenſe from one couplet to another, with
" variety of pauſes. This he has at-
" tempted, but without ſucceſs; his inter-
" rupted lines are unpleaſing, and his ſenſe,
" as leſs diſtinct, is leſs ſtriking." A motley combination of rhyme with blank verſe.

CONGREVE.

"LANGUOR of convaleſcence," truly Johnſonian. Congreve's noted declaration to Voltaire, has received the repreheniion it deſerves. However, Addiſon attributes his ceaſing to write, as a mark of his prudence in knowing when to leave off. Indeed a mere gentleman, one of a ſmooth bag of pebbles proud of his *vis inertia*, is as inſignificant a being as can be conceived.

" His comedies have therefore, in ſome
" degree, the operation of tragedies; they
" ſurprize rather than divert, and raiſe ad-
" miration oftener than merriment." That is, they are witty, but not humourous; but they hardly much reſemble tragedies, unleſs in their baneful effect.

" Looking tranquillity." *Mourning Bride.*

Tranquillity is but a feeble word, and yet ſolemnity would not perhaps be a better.

——" By

——————" By fate of war to prove
" The victor worthy of the *fair one's* love."

To be ſure the application of the ladies' epithet *fair*, to a heifer, unleſs an Europa, is hardly worthy of a polite gallant. Be that as it may, our author could not on a leſs favourable occaſion than this, omit an opportunity of being merry on paſtoral: indeed fable is ill adapted to the pathetic, and ſome of the lines quoted from Congreve are rough and uncouth, and the words of ſeveral of them interſected by the accent, as

" The hov'ring winds on down-y wings ſhall wait around,
" And catch, and waft to for-eign lands the flying ſound
" Encompaſs'd all the ming-led maſs of ſeas and lands."

A mode not allowable but in Pindarics, if in them.

If our lexicographer had written, " He " ſometimes retains what *would have been* " more properly omitted," inſtead of the jargon, " he ſometimes retains what *were* " more properly omitted," it might have been as well or better.

BLACKMORE.

—"AND let it be remembered for his honour, that to have been
" once a ſchool-maſter, is the only reproach
" which all the perſpicacity of malice, ani-
" mated by wit, has ever fixed upon his
" private life."

This is a ſpecimen of fine irony, ſevere as the animadverſion may ſeem. The pride and folly of mankind, and of nominal Chriſtians is ſuch, that it is their ſupreme glory to mock and ſpurn the humility of him whoſe diſciples they profeſs themſelves, but with real contempt and hatred of him.

" To this cenſure, may be oppoſed the
" approbation of Locke," who hated po-
etry as much as do the inhabitants of Cheapſide.

" The reſt of the *Lay Monks* ſeem to be
" (rather to have been) but feeble mortals,
" in

" in comparifon with the gigantic Johnfon,
" who yet, with all his abilities, and the
" help of the fraternity, could drive the
" publication but to forty papers, which
" were afterwards collected into a volume,
" and called in the title *A Sequel to the*
" *Spectator*."

Thefe biographies form together the literary hiftory of a century, which might be termed the golden one.

" His account of *Wit*, will fhew with how
" little clearnefs he is content to think, and
" how little his thoughts are recommended
" by his language."

This cenfure, though fevere, is juft. As he at one time wrote in the ftile of the merchant and trader, fo in this defcription of genius, rather than of *wit*, he difcovers the phyfician. Poor Blackmore, like Dennis, had the luck to be a whetftone as well as a wit.

" One paffage, which I have found al-

" ready twice, I will here exhibit, becauſe
" I think it better expreſſed than could be
" expected from the common tenour of his
" proſe."

As to the quotation alluded to: it is certain that many put confidence in an accidental profeſſion of religion, without a ſenſe of it, as they poſſeſs a thoughtleſs kind of love of their country; the former calculated to the Romiſh religion, and the latter to French government.

FENTON.

FENTON.

" *MARIAMNE* is written in lines of ten ſyllables, with few of thoſe re-
" redundant terminations which the drama
" not only admits but requires, as more
" nearly approaching to real dialogue."

This correſponds with my idea. With theſe lines, conſiſting of eleven ſyllables, Shakeſpeare abounds more than Milton; of which the following in Cato are examples:

" The wide, th' unbounded proſpect lies before me;
" But ſhadows, clouds, and darkneſs reſt upon it."

" Steele, in ſome parts of the *Guardian*,
" had praiſed Ambroſe Philips." This ſeems to be a ſmall miſtake; all the papers on paſtoral poetry, except one by Pope in his own praiſe, being by Tickell.

GAY.

GAY.

"HIS *What d'ye call it*, a kind of mock "tragedy, in which the images "were comic, and the action grave." From diſproportions always proceed burleſque, not ſeldom nearly the conſequence of common things inveſted with pompous diction in the Rambler.

"His friends perſuaded him to ſell his "ſhare."—With all due ſubmiſſion to the lexicographer, I apprehend that *endeavoured to perſuade*, would have been more proper; *perſuaded to*, being nearly tantamount to *prevailed with*.

"For this he is ſaid to have been pro-"miſed a reward, which he had doubtleſs "magnified with all the wild expectations "of indigence and vanity."

Why would Johnſon always delight to degrade

degrade genius, and render it the contempt of rich fools?

" His *fables* ſeem to have been a favourite " work; for, having publiſhed one volume, " he left another behind him."

Experience has proved them to be excellent, and the introduction to them is admirable. From the latter part of them, it ſeems ſtrange that the neglect of a court ſhould have rendered him miſerable, whoſe character entitled him to look down on courtiers as the buzzing inſects of a day. Query, Was the humourous paper in the *Adventurer*, concerning an author's reading his tragedy to a great perſon, aimed at Gay? The form of his fables is, I think, original, and, like the *Beggar's Opera*, they will hardly be equalled.

He was not a great, but a witty, adroit, various, and original writer. It is obſervable that Pope has remarked his ſimplicity, and Johnſon his vanity. Our author, intent upon rhodomantade, alſo denominates

nates him a writer adapted to barbarians, becauſe of his plaintive paſtoral of *Dione*: but perhaps he who prefers the world as it is man's, to it as it is God's, is rather a barbarian.

LANSDOWN,

LANSDOWNE,

IT may be perceived from our author's mean opinion of him, was a lover as well as lord: as to his poetry, I have a better opinion of it than our author, whose mind was, in some respects, as narrow as a crane's neck.

YALDEN.

YALDEN.

" WHEN Namur was taken by King
" William, Yalden made an ode.
" There was never any reign more cele-
" brated by the poets than that of Wil-
" liam, who had very little regard for fong
" himſelf, but happened to employ miniſ-
" ters who pleaſed themſelves with the
" praiſe of patronage."

This is a moſt pungent ſting of contempt; but it is certainly ſhameful to attribute good actions to worthleſs motives, and as fooliſh for Johnſon to declare himſelf a Jacobite in every page. As to his laughing at poetry, he had indeed no reliſh for any but didactic; and had he been apprehenſive that ever a golden age (let no punſter remind us of his penſion) would be on earth, how fervently would he have prayed to be delivered from it; and how inſipid and wretched muſt he have deemed the condition of Adam and Eve before their fall,

when

when neither taverns, veniſon, nor ſlander, were in being!

The laſt *and* in the laſt paragraph of Yalden's life is ſuperfluous.

TICKELL.

TICKELL.

"TO Tickell, however, cannot be re-
"fused a high place among the
"minor poets."

If by the term *minor poet*, the quantity of his poetry is meant, he is properly so called; but if the quality is thereby underſtood, it is a diſparagement.

HAMMOND'S

LOVE-complaints were precious food for the maw of Johnſon, who in mumbling them did not, however, perceive that the alternate quatrain has a ſolemnity ſuited to elegy.

SOMERVILLE

WAS not likely to be followed far by him over fix-bar gates; but has ſtarted a Savage in his hunt.

T. SAVAGE.

SAVAGE.

" To be humane, generous, and can-
" did, is a very high degree of me-
" rit in any caſe; but thoſe qualities de-
" ſerve ſtill greater praiſe, when they are
" found in that condition which makes al-
" moſt every other man, for whatever rea-
" ſon, contemptuous, inſolent, petulant,
" ſelfiſh, and brutal."

If this ſevere animadverſion, too characteriſtic of all mankind, is peculiarly applicable to players, ſome ſhew of reaſon may perhaps be aſſigned, poſſibly, that continually converſant with fictitious miſery and calamity, they may loſe conception of the reality; and thus tragedians may reſemble butchers; and Savage might be well aſhamed of being enrolled with them, curſed as he was moreover with the twin curſes of humanity, pride, and poverty, in their full extent. From what cauſe ſoever proceeds, if the cenſure is juſt, this callouſneſs: To

the generous humanity, ſufficient to cover a multitude of ſins, of two players, Mr. Wilkes and Mrs. Oldfield, let me add the name of Mr. Samuel Foote; whoſe noble conduct towards the arch impoſtor, Charles Price, ſtamps him, always acknowledged admirable for his wit and ingenuity, and highly eſtimable, as he is now known to have been for his learning, and amiable for his unſuſpicious ſincerity, the certain criterion of a good mind, unacquainted with deceit, with the character of exalted Chriſtianity. In the life of Price (written with a not unpleaſant dry archneſs) it appears that Mr. Foote could forgive, and even befriend the man who villainouſly and brutally endeavoured to convert his confidence and kindneſs to his entire deſtruction.

" He always himſelf denied that he was " drunk, as had been generally reported."

Then it muſt have been a duel with Sinclair and the maid. Drunkenneſs cannot indeed be generally admitted for an excuſe for any crime: yet, if malice prepenſe, as

cannot

cannot be denied, conſtitutes the heinouſneſs of every one, real drunkenneſs, in which the blood is warm, is a great mitigation in *foro conſcietiæ*, for none will contend, *a priori*, that drunkenneſs is a crime equal to murder.

" Good is the conſequence of evil," is a poſition of dangerous tendency, in which Johnſon verged towards Mandeville. If indeed, by the preſent depravity of human nature, it cannot be but *offences muſt ariſe, woe be to him by whom they come*, ſince each individual is a free agent. And the ſuggeſtion that vice may be expiated by its own ſufferings in this world, where it is triumphant is very dangerous.

" That he ſold ſo valuable a perform-
" ance"—The Wanderer.

Savage, accurate and negligent, ſenſible and fooliſh, was in an extraordinary manner at once careleſs about the preſent and the future, with a quick ſenſe of both; it being difficult to determine which he va-

lued moſt a good dinner or fame: ſo ſays Horace, *Carpe diem*; and *Exegi monumentum.*

He was kind to his perjured accuſer, and ungrateful to a generous patron. He was preciſe and extravagant; tragical and capricious; employed on jollity and comma's; freaks and ſemicolons. Wit and prudence are not often united; far indeed from being united in him, yet with wit he combined minuteneſs. What a happy thoughtleſsneſs did he poſſeſs; who could at eaſe entertain himſelf and his companions with pleaſantry and gibes, when an empty pocket would have been continually in the thoughts of another.

" So comes the reck'ning when the banquet's o'er:
" The dreadful reck'ning, and men ſmile no more."

was not anticipated by him.

" He (Tyrconnell) was ſo much provoked
" by the wit and virulence of Savage, that
" he came with a number of attendants,
" that did no honour to his courage, to
" beat him at a coffee-houſe."

It appears ſtrange, that in ſuch a country as this, ſuch outrages ſhould be heard of; and that the ſufferer had better ſit down quiet, than ſeek legal redreſs. This, however, was the caſe before the miraculous paſſing of Lord Mansfield's Privilege Bill; which, excellent as it is whilſt it laſts, wants an amendment to render it completely efficacious; that where the jury give damages to a certain amount to be ſpecified, the plaintiff ſhould have, not nominal, but real coſts of ſuit, with the option, however, for the defendant to have them taxed. This would at once be a check on the ſhameful impoſitions of attornies, and transfer the additional expence of aſcertaining the coſts, from the injured to the injurer.

"The ſpirit of Mr. Savage, indeed, ne-
"ver ſuffered him to ſolicit a reconcilia-
"tion."

It is indeed difficult, eſpecially for a gentleman, to live long with any degree of ſatisfaction in a ſtate of dependance on a fellow-ſubject; an argument for monarchy

under which the meaneſt exciſeman or ſoldier conſiders himſelf as the ſervant of none but a crowned head. Mankind are too wayward for each other to preſerve a due medium: the ſuperior will act the rigid churchman; and the inferior the ſtubborn puritan, and fancy affronts: ſays the poet,

" Were I to curſe the miſcreant I hate,
" Attendance and dependance be his fate!

Mr. Savage thought it neceſſary, to his own vindication, to proſecute him in the King's-Bench! A redreſs wanting to complete his ruin.

" On a bulk, in a cellar, or in a glaſs-
" houſe among thieves and beggars, was to
" be found the author of the Wanderer."
Would a curious enquirer determine that there are pleaſures peculiar to every ſituation. Savage's life exhibits an example of ſurprizing irreſolution and folly; yet not more ſurprizing than the improvidence of mankind in general, in regard to futurity, were not indeed the preſſure on the material ſcenes almoſt irreſiſtible in wordly want:

want: but what can excuſe others? A niggard, being told how vain was his ſavingneſs, for that the fruits of it would be quickly ſquandered by his heir, made anſwer—that if his heir ſhould have as much enjoyment in ſpending as he had in ſaving, it would be great. And doubtleſs the œconomiſt; the maſter of his money, his morals, and himſelf; poſſeſſes a tranquillity, a baſis of happineſs unknown to him who floats awhile on the ſtream of diſſipation, perhaps to ſink, the deriſion and ſcorn of thoſe who battened in his luxury and ruin, ſeverer than poverty and hunger itſelf. Fooliſh as was Savage, his waſting his money at a tavern, was leſs ſo than giving it away to ſharpers.

" He attempted in Wales to promote a
" ſubſcription for his works, and had once
" hopes of ſucceſs; but in a ſhort time af-
" terwards formed a reſolution of leaving
" that part of the country."

He was volatile as mercury, and combuſtible as gunpowder; never to be at reſt,

and

and every minute liable to be blown up; himfelf a wandering comet, who took not delight in his aphelion.

" It is not without fome fatisfaction, that " I can produce the fuffrage of Savage in " favour of mankind.

It is hard to conceive what fhould induce any one with eyes in his head, to think well of mankind in general.

This life is written in a very eafy and entertaining manner; it having been publifhed many years ago, at which time Johnfon was lefs quaint, atrabilious, conceited, and wayward than in his later years, and planned it lefs haftily than the lives of the poets. If he fometimes borders on tautology, it fhould be confidered that in nice difcriminations it is very difficult to avoid obfervations nearly tautologous, without circumlocutions and explanations which the reader muft fupply. However, this *apology for the life of Savage*, is by fome confidered as a blot in Johnfon's character; and indeed morals

morals are herein ſtretched to latitudinarianiſm, ſuch as, it may be feared, granted himſelf a diſpenſation; for Johnſon expected nothing of perfection either in writing or morality, and ſomething was due to fellow-feeling with Savage. In this entertaining hiſtory, he rather talks than writes to the reader; directs him on the road to knowledge as if preſent; informs him of the characters and circumſtances of the inhabitants as he paſſes along, and becomes his friend as well as companion, reſembling the manner of Plutarch's colloquial-like ſtyle.

That part of my readers who are acquainted with Gregory's Life of Chatterton, can ſcarcely be able to peruſe the life of Savage, without being diſpoſed to draw ſome compariſon between them. The author of Love and Madneſs, has indeed compared Chatterton with Mahomet. There is, I confeſs, this reſemblance,—that they are

both

both conſidered by many as impoſtors: but though Chatterton talked of becoming a methodiſt, moſt perſons will be inclined rather to compare the cant of Mahomet and Cromwell.

It appears that Chatterton's too true profeſſion, and even boaſt, that he was no Chriſtian, was the ſource of the moſt poignant miſery in this world, and the cauſe of his ſad exit; the effect of pride, a folly which, however ſurpriſingly it takes its abode in men of capacity, cannot poſſibly reſide in a breaſt occupied with the wiſdom of the goſpel—that ſovereign and only antidote againſt the cup of adverſity. It might be expected that genius ſhould ſtem the torrent of empty and ſenſeleſs vanity; but this it is often found incapable of doing, unleſs fortified and cemented with religious philoſophy; of which the commixture of ſenſe with weakneſs, and of fine parts with vulgarity in Chatterton, devoid of a dreg of economy, was a melancholy proof; for his firſt ſtarving, and afterwards poiſoning himſelf, can hardly be denominated

nated

nated " the ſtrong conſcioufneſs of intellec-
" tual excellence," an expreſſion of the bi-
ographer in alleviation of the pride attri-
buted to him.

Mr. Gregory, on the ſuppoſition that Chatterton was the author or conſtructor of the poems under the name of Rowley, of which few perſons entertain a doubt, places his genius above Dryden's, and be-low only Shakeſpeare's; thus allowing room for him between Shakeſpeare and Milton; and totally ejecting the latter from compe-tition with the former.

The probable truth is, that Chatterton altered and ſupplied chaſms at leaſt, if he did not interpolate, ſome ancient MSS. a-mong which he might find the name of Rowley, without which he would have hardly undertaken ſuch a work. This is a ſalvo both for his veracity and genius, otherwiſe at variance; and alſo reconciles other circumſtances. It is ſuperfluous to obſerve, that in all things, and in myſteries among the reſt, the truth uſually lies in a medium.

medium. Moreover, in the accompliſhment of his work, he might have unknown aſſiſtance, as Mahomet is ſaid to have in the formation of the Alcoran: but the rapidity of the genius of Chatterton appears in one of his ſprightly letters, in which he related that he ſuddenly compoſed ſeveral ſongs the ſame evening after the play.

It ſeems remarkable that Chatterton's abſtinence from animal food and ſpirituous liquors, is alledged by this biographer as a proof of the preponderation of his virtues over his faults, though his profligacy towards women were acknowledged; eſpecially if it be conſidered that ebriety is the beſt, ſurely only excuſe for diſſoluteneſs of that nature, as fooliſh as wicked.

Reſpecting the unhappy diſappearance of this phenomonon, ſome argue that ſuicide is as bad, and worſe, than murder, becauſe precluding repentance; but it ſeems but an indifferent apology for murder, to commit it to repent of it. It appears a ſelf-evident truth of analogy, till refined away,

away, that perſons have a better right to diſpoſe of their own lives than of thoſe of others, as they have of their own proper-ty. As to the cowardice of ſuicide, when Shakeſpeare makes Hamlet ſay, that " con-" ſcience makes cowards of us all," did he mean that it is cowardice in the miſerable to forbear ſuicide? It is, however, unlucky that the fineſt ſoliloquy in the world, ſhould ſuggeſt a falſe and dangerous application.

A man poſſeſſed of neglected genius may have ſome excuſe for a deſperate reſentment againſt mankind, but not of complaint againſt his maker, who previouſly endued him with the moſt valuable property in his gift, if made a good uſe of; and which, had Chatterton exerciſed a ſmall degree of prudence, would have furniſhed him whoſe firſt literary proſpects were much better than Johnſon's, with a competence, and at length, probably, with importance and fame, *the deſire of which is the laſting diſeaſe of noble minds.*

It is but juſtice to Mr. Gregory to add, that

that this piece of Britiſh biography is very inſtructive and entertaining, interſperſed with excellent, ſound, and new reflections, and diſcriminative ſpecimens of an exact taſte in poetry and criticiſm.

It is but juſtice to Mr. Gregory to add, that

SWIFT.

SWIFT.

"THE advice and patronage of Sir William Temple." Swift ſeems to have imbibed his unreaſonable predilection for the ancients from Sir William; for in the *Battle of the Books*, he has omitted ſome of the moſt eminent of all Britiſh authors, alone ſufficient to ſtagger the ancients, even in literature as diſtinguiſhed from ſcience.

Harley was a confounded queer dog.

"*Gulliver's Travels.*" As to the difficulty of criticiſing this remarkable production, it may be termed an original peculiar romance, of more merit than is here allowed it, whilſt we may hope that there is room in the univerſe, though not on earth, for beings as juſt as the Houyhnms. Swift's knowledge of ſea terms appears in it extraordinary, and I wiſh that of mankind were exaggerated.

In regard to Stella, our author writes, not often the caſe, without conveying information.

" His *Tale of a Tub* has little reſemblance
" to his other pieces. It exhibits a ve-
" hemence and rapidity of mind, a copi-
" ouſneſs of images, and a vivacity of dic-
" tion, ſuch as he afterwards never poſſeſſ-
" ed, or never exerted. It is of a mode ſo
" diſtinct and peculiar, that it muſt be con-
" ſidered by itſelf; what is true of that, is
" not true of any thing elſe which he has
" written."

This judgment is partly true and partly falſe. For, in my opinion, this Tale poſſeſſes a cant-burleſque phraſe, not indeed to be found in any of Swift's writings, when he had formed a better ſtile.

" The practice of ſaving being once ne-
" ceſſary, became habitual; and grew firſt
" ridiculous, and at laſt deteſtable. But
" his avarice, though it might exclude plea-
" ſure, was never ſuffered to encroach upon

" his virtue." How then could it be *de-teſtable?*

" Delany is willing to think, that Swift's " mind was not much tainted with this " groſs corruption before his long viſit to " Pope." He who was paramount to Swift in naſtineſs, would be poorly characteriſed by a compariſon with a Hottentot, as Lord Cheſterfield denominated our author. In many reſpects Johnſon and Swift had reſemblance: both doctors; both Jacobites; both men of ſtrong parts and authoritative; and both deaf to muſic and ſentimental poetry; but I will not add that both mingled in a faction in order to initiate themſelves to notice; though it is too well known, that merit alone is of little avail, except that in conjunction with virtue and honeſty, it will not fail to render a writer odious. Johnſon alſo followed Swift's precept and example, in adopting a ſtile conſiſting of *proper words in proper places*, ſeldom figurative.

POPE.

" THIS, and this only, is told by Pope, " who is more willing, as I have " heard obſerved, to ſhew what his father " was not, than what he was." He defined his father, as Cowley did wit, and Congreve humour,—by negatives. It has ſince appeared that he was a linen-draper.

" *Ode on Solitude*." A diſcerning perſon, might have perceived from this Ode, that he was by nature a poet. Horace, and other ancients, have obſerved, that poets delight in ſolitude. Cowley ſays, that no woods are by them thought thick enongh; and *Melancholy marked Gray for her own.* Pope's early works, the verſions of *Chaucer*, and of the firſt book of the *Thebais*, were alſo fine ſpecimens. As to the heroic poem of " *Alcander*," I do not thank Atterbury for perſuading him to burn it; which doubtleſs contained ſome bloſſoms of genius; and it is to be regretted, that dirt and jewels were

were thrown away together, though it is probable that Pope might interſperſe them among his other works.

Wycherley ſeems to have infected Pope with Cowley's conſtant ſtretch after wit; who was a full match for the antiquated ſcribbler at his own weapons; never was flattery thicker ſown.

" He" (Cromwell) " was fond, and per-
" haps vain, of amuſing himſelf with poetry
" and criticiſm; and ſometimes ſent his
" performances to Pope, who did not for-
" bear ſuch remarks as were now and then
" unwelcome."

How few there are that can bear the ſincerity of friendſhip, eſpecially if a little indiſcreet! Indeed a ſpice of flattery, as of ſcandal, is almoſt neceſſary; and often ſpurs a man on to worthy attempts. Atterbury and Cromwell were too ſincere, or poſſibly enviouſly ſincere to Pope: the former blamed rhyme and his Sakeſpeare, his all; and Cromwell taxed him with ſtealing his

roundeau. Walſh was wiſer; and without flattering him injurioufly, retained his regard and gratitude as long as he lived, with the credit of initiating ſo great a poet;

" Such late was Walſh, the Muſe's judge and friend,
" Who knew full well to blame or to commend."

Any one can bolt his thoughts at random: ſomething is due to addreſs, to the way of the world, and to human nature. If one bluntly tells his friend all he knows to his diſparagement, his friend will be apt to ſuppoſe, in addition to this mortification, that part is ſtill ſuppreſſed. What is good-breeding but deference; and deference but negative flattery? Lowering ourſelves has the ſame effect as raiſing our companions; but common good-manners are too great a ſacrifice for the ſelf-importance of perſons of theſe poliſhed ages to make to ſociety; but the mortification of the humble and meek, is a neceſſary ingredient in the practice of high breeding.

" The ſame year was written the *Eſſay on*
" *Criticiſm*; a work which diſplays ſuch ex-
" tent

" tent of comprehenſion, ſuch nicety of
" diſtinction, ſuch acquaintance with man-
" kind, and ſuch knowledge both of ancient
" and modern learning, as are not often
" attained by the matureſt age, and longeſt
" experience."

Theſe circumſtances deſerve inveſtigation; the generality of mankind are unqualified for reading or ſound obſervation, but, like brutes, ſoon arrive at their *ne plus ultra*. Their heads are like ground froſt-bound, unſuſceptible of ſcientific impreſſion. On the contrary, thoſe of ingenious men are like cultivated lands, in which every plant takes root. Such ſeem to have minds that, to continue the alluſion, reſemble ſoils, that, according to ſome have ſeeds* interſperſed

* The ſpontaneous growth of plants is, I think, generally rejected; but I wiſh to be informed how plants, the ſeeds of which are not liable to be wafted by the wind, riſe quickly on earth taken from the bottom of wells, &c. Some have recourſe to new ſtrata of earths accumulated at the flood; a ſtrange and unſatisfactory account, as plants ſpring from earths taken from different depths. Men muſt confeſs that they know nothing.

by nature at different depths, and withal endued with a ſuperior faculty of intuition. But I obſerve that a principal mean by which ſenſible and virtuous perſons by degrees arrive at the knowledge of mankind, is inſtinct, aſſiſted by correſpondencies in the minds of others; from the latter of which it comes to paſs, that ill men become acquainted with the world ſooner than good men. Locke well ſays, that the difference between the ratiocination of human kind and animals, conſiſts in the ability of the former to combine, compare, and diſcriminate ideas wherein the vulgar fail; and are near akin to brutes and governed by cuſtom; and on the proportions to a greater or leſs endowment with ſuch power, knowledge much depends*.

With whatever contempt Dennis was treated, he was a *ſtumbling block and rock of offence*, as appears from Pope's and our au-

* For a very ingenious inveſtigation concerning the acquiſition of the knowledge of mankind, ſee an account of Whitaker's obſervations on Mary Queen of Scots, in the Engliſh Review for July 1787.

thor's frequent occaſion to mention him. In truth, he was a man of learning and of acute criticiſm; with a large ſhare of envy and malignity. His taſte expoſed him continually to the vexation of not being pleaſed with the writers of thoſe times; but nobody can deny, if humour ariſes from the *repreſentation of images in odd circumſtances and uncommon lights*, that, with all his dullneſs, he had ſome ſhare of it.

" What is this wit?——
" Where wanted, ſcorned; and envied where acquir'd."

There are two duplicities in the line, which may be both made ſenſe or nonſenſe, as they are taken by the right or wrong handle. It is plainly meant that thoſe who had not wit, ſcorned it (or rather pretended to ſcorn it) in others; and that thoſe who had it, were envied for it. But by taking it the wrong way, it might be made to mean, that thoſe ſcorned the ſelf-poſſeſſion of it, who had it not; and that they envied it in themſelves, who had it. So that the latter part is equally exceptionable with the

the former, were either ſo. As to the reſt; after Pope had deſcribed Dennis as

" Staring tremendous with a threat'ning eye,
" Like ſome fierce tyrant in old tapeſtry."

Dennis was about even with him in calling him " a downright monkey."

" From this account, given with evident " intention to raiſe the lady's character, it " does not appear that ſhe had any claim " to praiſe."

I am diſpleaſed to ſee the author of the *Rambler* a friend to monaſteries, though indeed religion may be better in a bad ſhape than in none at all. Haſty and culpable was the lady undoubtedly; but it ought to be conſidered, that no perſon ever has been or can be happy againſt violent inclinations, with conſtancy to a forced partner for life.

It is generally allowed, that parents, and perhaps guardians, ſhould have a negative voice; but this is not confirmed by the marriage-

marriage-act, not even to parents when the parties become of age. And what power ſoever either the one or the other may naturally or legally poſſeſs, they ought to exert it no longer than to diſcover whether the parties are really engaged by a ſettled affection, which none can ſever without ſacrilege to nature, or only by fancy or caprice. To thoſe on whom love has made a deep impreſſion, nothing but its object can give happineſs or peace of mind; conſiderations indeed that weigh little with the family-pride of parents. Indeed the arguments *for* and *againſt* have been ſo often adduced, that it is impoſſible to add to them, I will therefore draw the matter to this point; that an indulgence of paſſion may be attended with happineſs, but that the diſappointment of it cannot.

" He ſeems to have done only that for " which a guardian is appointed; he en- " endeavoured to direct his niece till ſhe " ſhould be able to direct herſelf." This is, to be ſure, ſomething to the purpoſe; yet

yet amorous fury is too dangerous to be pent up. Can a foreign country cure it? *Can madneſs with reaſon agree? Can love be controuled by advice* to wait years, ages to them, of uncertainty? O Johnſon! thou didſt not learn this of Shakeſpeare.

This poem, and the epiſtle of *Eloiſe to Abelard*, are replete with poetical fire, and ſtrike the imagination with a captivating horror. A perſon endued with a true reliſh of poetry can never be tired of reading them—

" Clouds interpoſe, waves roar, and winds ariſe."

Pope's pathetic poetry has certainly a charm hardly to be equalled; to which Tickell's elegy on Addiſon has, however, much reſemblance; and the lines quoted by our author from the *Mourning Bride*, are of the ſame claſs; and we may obſerve, that he has confeſſed the efficacy of religious verſe in theſe words;—" The mixture of religi-
" ous hope and reſignation, gives an eleva-
" tion and dignity to diſappointed love, which
" images merely natural cannot beſtow."

As

As to the mighty eulogium on the *Rape of the Lock*, that "he had now exhibited "boundleſs fertility of invention," its machinery is but an ingenious expanſion of that in Shakeſpeare's *Tempeſt*.

"The ſuperiority of Pope is ſo ingeni-
"ouſly diſſembled, and the feeble lines of
"Philips ſo ſkilfully preferred, that Steele,
"being deceived, was unwilling to print
"the paper leſt Pope ſhould be offended."
It becomes not me to pronounce on this matter; but I believe that moſt readers have been all along deceived. As to *feeble lines*, does any one expect others from ruſtics?

As to Pope's verſes to Jervais "betray-
"ing his ignorance of painting," their generality might, one would have thought, have exempted them from that; and Dr. Warton's opinion is much different.

"He that runs againſt time, has an an-
"tagoniſt not ſubject to cauſualties."

This

This curious remark puts me in mind of a proverbial ſaying, which attended to, would have prevented a thouſand from ruin; and which, with the addition of *apparently*, renders it always practicable; and I ſtrongly recommend to the reader, that he may not complain of the price of theſe remarks,—*never defer till to-morrow, what may be apparently as well done to-day*. This, with method in accounts, could not often fail to procure fortunes to men in buſineſs. Horace has ſome verſes to this purpoſe;—

Sic mihi tarda fluurt ingrataque tempora quæ ſpem, &c.

It is by perſeverance, not ſnatches, that ſteady Mr. Trot, who may be compared to time, gets money. A foot pace is preferable to a gallop, in which the rider is likely to be thrown; which the Dutchman well knows. It is the hound, not the greyhound, that catches the hare at the long run; and both in compoſing and reading, intervals are neceſſary; in the former, to look round and wait for ideas; and in the latter, to relieve the mind leſt ſhe become jaded and moped, and pleaſure ceaſe; wherein

wherein buſineſs and letters differ. A perſon need not be always in his cloſet to become a ſcholar or an author, nor ſhould he; but he may always have a pencil about him, that he may not forget his fugitive ideas, or be revolving them in his mind to his own anxiety and diſguſt of company. As farthings and pence accumulate to pounds, words accumulate to pages, and thoughts to volumes: but the progreſs of the fancy, the infinite-like operations of the mind, are not like to material mechaniſm, keeping a regular pace.

Mr. Craggs's offer of providing for Pope, was noble.

" That wrath which *hurl'd* to Pluto's gloomy reign."—

hurling ſouls is a remarkable expreſſion.

" Apollo's awful enſigns *grace* his hands."—

It ſeems that *grac'd*, was firſt written. The arbitrary promiſcuous uſe of the preſent and preterite tenſes, is very frequent and convenient at leaſt. Lord Kaims has a good obſervation, that, in a paragraph, the

uſe

uſe firſt of the preſent, and afterwards of the paſt, is a kind of anticlimax.

The eight lines beginning with " But " Pallas"—are pointed wrong throughout, but are very fine.

" High on his helm celeſtial lightnings play,"

is extremely poetical ; alſo,

" Crown her hero with diſtinguiſh'd praiſe,"

though plain language, has, like many parts of ſcripture, a natural intrinſic ſublimity,

I think that in

" A flood of glory *burſts* from all the ſkies."

Burſts, how poetical ſoever, hardly well agrees with the admirable ſtill ſcene.

" It is not likely that Hallifax had any " benevolence to Pope ; it is evident that " Pope looked on Hallifax with ſcorn and " hatred."

Why ſhould Pope look with ſcorn and hatred on a nobleman who had raiſed himſelf

ſelf to eminence, and then became the patron of letters? for he wrote to a third perſon that he had his Lordſhip's patronage.

"In all this there was no hypocriſy; "for he confeſſed that he found in Ad- "diſon ſomething more than in any man;" *in the awkwardeſt man breathing*, according to Cheſterfield.

I wonder not that our author ſhould be ſo ſevere on Pope's grotto; eſpecially as in the higheſt reach of art, he had converted an inconvenience to an advantage. He relates his wiſh for a ſtatue, in ſome verſes ſuch as thoſe for which he teſtified his fondneſs. The following tranſlation, which he mentions, has ſomething inimitably ſoothing and delightful, and is, I think, ſuperior to the Latin; and I fear not to riſk my opinion, that our language is ſuſceptible of more tenderneſs and pathos than either the Latin or Greek, which have nothing to come up to our *ah's!* and *oh's!* I allude to

" Nymph of the grot, theſe ſacred ſprings I keep,
" And to the murmurs of the water's ſleep ;
" Ah, ſpare my ſlumbers, ſoftly tread the cave,
" And drink in ſilence, or in ſilence lave!"

I know not whether others, like me, ſet their affections on pieces of writing ſo as ſometimes to diſreliſh alterations even for the better, and can thus lay an equal claim to conſtancy. It is hence perhaps that I prefer

" Whoe'er thou art, ah! gently tread the cave,
" Ah! bathe in ſilence, or in ſilence lave."

I have ſeen it, though *bathe* and *lave* are too like; I think it would be better,

Ah! ſpare my ſlumbers, ſoftly tread the cave;
Ah! drink in ſilence, or in ſilence lave.

Repetitions have ſometimes a ſweet charm.

" He grew dexterous by practice, and
" every ſheet enabled him to write the
" next with more facility. The books of
" Fenton have very few alterations by the
" hand of Pope."

It requires perhaps a better judge than I am,

I am, to determine which preponderates, Addiſon's pre-eminence in proſe, or Pope's in verſe. But it ſeems extraordinary that Fenton's and Broome's verſification ſhould equal their maſter's; and I do not perceive that Parnell's *Frogs and Mice* is unequal. I have heard Addiſon's critique on Milton named as the beſt that ever was, except Spence's on the *Odyſſey*.

" I have heard of an ideot, who uſed to " revenge his vexations by lying all night " upon the bridge!" What means this? That Pope was an ideot?

" I know not whether there does not " appear ſomething more ſtudied and arti- " ficial in his productions than the reſt, " except one long letter by Bolingbroke, " compoſed with all the ſkill and induſtry " of a profeſſed author."

Pope ſpeaks of himſelf as throwing out in his letters at random; as may ſeem to ſome to have been the caſe, except in one

pretty long one of his to Addiſon, to whom he confeſſes an inclination to ſhew off. I believe women of education more ready at their pen, as well as tongue, than men. Lady Mary Wortley Montague's letters are written with exemplary fluency and careleſſneſs.

" —But having afterwards diſcovered, " or been ſhewn, that the *truth* which ſub- " ſiſted *in ſpite of reaſon* could not be very " *clear*."—

On this a *certain alluſion* may be readily impoſed.

" Crouſaz's *Examen de Pyrrhoniſme*."—Fataliſm is indeed a ſpecies of ſcepticiſm; that is, it may be ſo reſolved or conſtrued. The aſſertion amidſt the enormities of the world, that *whatever is, is right*, though our author himſelf, no great metaphyſician, ſometimes half-inclined to Mandevillianiſm, is contradictory to the ſenſes: but *fataliſm* may be taken by the other handle, *and*

whatever

whatever is, is wrong, be equally extracted from it. Warburton's character, of traits a kin to Johnſon's own, is finely drawn, exhibiting the ſpirit of genius, fervid, active, ſearching, and graſping.

" Pope never afterwards"—What ſentiments are theſe? Johnſon, whilſt he damps the ſpirit of thoſe who would attempt to mend the manners of the times by expoſing them, attributes the ſatires of Pope, though on the Tory-ſide, to vile motives: it is then reaſonable to ſuppoſe that Johnſon himſelf had no better for his two tranſlations of Juvenal, his Ramblers, &c. But is it not contradictory to common ſenſe, and the nature of things, to ſuppoſe that juſt cenſure has no effect, and contributes not to the accumulated code of human morals*? Indeed it ſeems that Johnſon was a ſtrange compound of inconſiſtency, and had the fortune to have too much care taken of his writings left behind him.

* See the Adventurer, No. 137.

" Pope conſulted the modern writers of
" Latin poetry."

There is a great advantage in an aſſemblage of writers in a language known to all, like the Latin. Such a fraternity contain within themſelves a univerſal republic; a name indeed well applied to letters in general, wherein different countries, ranks and degrees, lords, women, and ploughmen, are, as in love and death, blended into one common maſs, tending withal to political republicaniſm.

" He ſhould therefore have ſuffered the
" pamphlet to flutter and die, without con-
" feſſing that it ſtung him."

Johnſon, with ſenſe too formal, heavy and phlegmatic for a poet of an high claſs, wrote one tragedy, *Irene*, which, though not unpoetical, and though *got up*, as the term is, with great eclat by his contemned friend, Garrick, contained ſo little of the *vis dramatica*, ſo little action, and that little horrible, that it fluttered nine nights, and

then

then died, like Cibber's pamphlet: *illine hæ lachrymæ*, and his contempt of all players, as well as Cibber, whoſe head (to do him juſtice) was adorned with laurel, his fore-head caſed with braſs, and, as our author would repreſent all players, his heart with ſtone. Whenever Johnſon left the beaten track of thought, it was through affecta-tion: as when he affirmed, a perſon who is afraid of any thing, or who goes to bed be-fore midnight, to be a ſcoundrel. Be this as it may, he never wrote better than in this acute account of Pope's ill-judged and contrived vengeance againſt Cibber.

" Let no man dream of influence beyond " his life." What a remark! though not deſtitute of truth, and that perhaps which made our author ſo fond of life. Even Charles V. found himſelf dead whilſt liv-ing; yet Chriſtina, whoſe geuius was of different caſt, was perſonally remembered longer:

" 'Tis all thou art, and all the proud ſhall be"—

is a verſe of Pope himſelf.

In regard to the want of talents of converſation, ſaid to have been the caſe with Dryden, Pope, Addiſon, &c. the Duke of Buckinghamſhire has this line on Pope;

" A good companion, and as firm a friend."

and Pope himſelf has this on Addiſon;—

" Born to converſe, and write, and live with eaſe."

One is apt to imagine theſe reports of thoſe ready wits, the offspring of envy; as to plague Garrick it was given out, and by his friend, that he could not put on the gentleman; the very ſtring together with his deſire of the reputation of dancing, to which his heart moſt vibrated, that which *circum præcordia luſit*. Eminent perſons are ſure to be thus tiezed, to have ſome ſtigma entailed, ſome ſpot affixed to their ſplendour, that it may not be totally inſupportable to others, or to themſelves. So Cowley, the author of the *Miſtreſs*, was afraid to declare his paſſion; and Lord Mansfield, the oracle of the law, muſt be unacquainted with it as long as he lived. But we ſhould not be too ready to cenſure Johnſon for

want

want of candour; who, if he reprobated his own father for his beggary, condemned Addiſon for caſting the dirt of poverty at the Pretender.

" But the truth is, that ſuch were ſimple " friendſhips of the *Golden Age*, and are " now the friendſhips of children."

Golden Age at laſt!—To ſee the ſacred name of friendſhip treated thus, is monſtrous and abominable. Hawkeſworth, in his old age, wrote the introduction to Cooke's Voyages; the condemned paſſage of which is no more equivocal than ſome of the maxims inculcated in theſe *Lives*, with which they are tinged throughout, and rendered the ſchool of that which the world calls *what's what*, rather than of virtue: ſtill the obſervations on Pope's letters are in the main, juſt; which yet I like much, though Gray's are ſaid to be the beſt our language affords. A few pages after, we find our author defending the manners of mankind, on whoſe friendlineſs he had been ſo curiouſly deſcanting, and repreſenting

friendſhip

friendſhip in ſuch colours, that henceforward none will like the accuſation, but every ſenſible man will be ambitious of the character of a hypocrite, a Mandeville, and a Machiavel. Churls may indeed withdraw their thoughts from worldly greatneſs, but wiſe men, who know what's what, are more forward to be ſlaves. Who can deſcribe the faſcinating charms of the notice of great fools? The ſun of riches and grandeur is not leſs dazzling to mortal eyes than the luminary above; and thoſe who would avoid its influence, muſt ſcarcely open their eyes: and if they fly into retirement, it is odds that they ſtill find greatneſs in ſome ſhape, probably in a focus of oppreſſion, where the inhabitants are too thin to obſtruct its rays. So that ſome are indeed compelled to think of that which they in truth deſpiſe. Thoſe who think to live independent and unmoleſted of wealth, the god of this world, will generally find themſelves miſtaken. Incenſe or ſlavery are the hecatombs greatneſs exacts at its ſhrine, and the world is ready to make the ſacrifice. Our author who was but partially

acquainted

acquainted with mankind, whom he contemplated through the medium of ſmoke, too much regarded the greatneſs, as it is called, of man, whoſe ſphere of action is but a point, and whoſe life is a ſpan, as really important: though the Heathen philoſophers had told him that nothing is great the contempt of which is greater; and tho' Cooper ſays, that they whoſe ambition is earthly, are cold and dead in regard to heavenly; that they who worſhip man have no room in their ſouls for the ſhrine of their Creator, their dull and microſcopic minds being incapable of any object but *little greatneſs*. Whether Pope's mind was really great, is another queſtion. Johnſon's was not, unleſs he was an hypocrite inverſe. He tells us (p. 158) that "indeed, it muſt "be ſome very powerful reaſon that can "drive back to ſolitude him who has once "enjoyed the pleaſures of ſociety." That is, to induce a perſon to *retire* from the world as it is man's, into it as it is God's. Yet our author an adorer of monaſteries!— O Johnſon! thy vulgar notions, and thy palliatives, pardon me, are to me diſguſting.

And

And what was the ſociety thou waſt ſo fond of? Not that of wits ſurely; for with "what degree of friendſhip wits might "live, very few were ſo much fools as to "enquire." Was it one wherein trifling compliances are ſubſtituted for real benefits, and not one virtue reſides? Was it a ſmooth poliſhed ſurface, in the vain mirror of which men ſmile and ſmile and are villains? And I do not implicitly ſubſcribe to the aſſertion, that "of things that ter-"minate in human life, the world is the "proper judge; that to deſpiſe its ſen-"tences, if it were poſſible, is not juſt; and "if it were juſt, is not poſſible;"—for I am not ſure that it is conſiſtent with my catechiſm. In regard to the pleaſures of ſociety; humane perſons (and Johnſon was himſelf, in many reſpects, eminently ſo, a noble quality though exerted in treating beggars with gin) will ſteal a thought from it to the unutterable miſeries and calamities of the earth; to diſeaſe and hunger, rapine and outrage, anguiſh and torments, with which it abounds.

The

The * following pages of ſtrictures on Pope's character are of another caſt; yet that geniuſes are "always endeavouring "more than they can do," ſeems hypothetical; for I believe that writers of genius are ſometimes ſatisfied, charmed, and enamoured of their productions.

Our author proceeds to deſcribe Pope's independence and exemption from laureat drudgery, in a fine vein of pleaſantry; and "he never exchanged praiſe for money, "nor opened a ſhop of condolence and "congratulation," is a ſtroke deſerving of quotation. But ſurely the aſſertion that "when Dryden had no pecuniary intereſt, "he had no further ſolicitude," wants qualification, ſpoken of one ſo really ſenſible of the worth of poetry and literature: and "Pope had perhaps the judgment of Dry-"den," might, ſome may think with more propriety, have been inverted; however, the diſcriminative parallel between theſe

* How could he deſpiſe thoſe *whom he lived by pleaſing*, is grammatically ill expreſſed, being complicated.

two poets is excellent, and this and the critique on *Paradiſe Loſt*, are inferior to no parts of this biography; and the parallel wherein, however, he uſes the epithet *velvet*, in a manner in which he condemns it in Gray, is cloſed with a modeſty and deference not very familiar to Johnſon. The criticiſm on the tranſlation of Homer is alſo ingenious, and, it may be, ſound. Homer may perhaps be ſaid to be rendered by Pope what he would have rendered himſelf had he lived in Pope's days: yet Pope may have carried elegance too far; and I think there is an unrivalled Homeric ſimplicity in the latter part of Dryden's firſt Book; and indeed I know not whether after all Addiſon did not ſay rightly, that Tickell has more of Homer than has Pope. But Johnſon's candour can never hold long; for he ſays Pope's, that is, Broome's notes, were intended to ſwell the ſize of the work.

"That the *Meſſiah* excels the Pollio, is no "great praiſe, if it be conſidered from "what original the improvements are de-"rived."

Does

Does this perfectly agree with the doctrine of our author and the orthodox critics, that religious ſubjects are unadapted to poetry; from which opinion, however, I beg leave to diſſent? Untruths, our author has obſerved, are apt to lead their broachers into inconſiſtency. What he ſays of the "dignity of *ambition*," concerning the *unfortunate lady*, is a quibble on the word.

"Beauties of this kind" (of adapting the ſound to the ſenſe) "are commonly fancied; "and when real, are technical and nugatory, not to be rejected, and not to be "ſollicited."

Verſe itſelf is in a manner technical.—Johnſon, without any ear, ſhould not have been forward to decide on this point. However, he does not deny an analogy between the currency of verſe and motion. If he had I might have ſilenced him with

"And run upon the *ſharp* wind of the North."

"Flies o'er the unbending corn," is heavy inſtead of ſwift; but "ſkims along the "main,"

" main," is precipitate ;—ſo that the whole of the line well repreſents one getting up and then running. In page 187, *there*, or the like, is wanting at the cloſe of a paragraph to complete the ſenſe, at " miſchief."

" Perhaps neither Pope nor Boileau, &c." —Our author is too apt to ſet the welfare of this life in competition with eternity; and here inculcates, that the trifling and whimſical vexations occaſioned by women, are more noxious than the lazineſs, gluttony, hypocriſy and ambition of a ſcandalous clergy. Yet thoſe are but the petty occurrences of life; whereas clerical villainy ſaps the foundation of all happineſs here and hereafter.

Pope's aſſertion in his letter to Mr. Bridges is exactly in the ſpirit of Johnſon, that " men never approve of any others' " ſenſe, but as it ſquares exactly with their " own." Still it is to be hoped, that all candour and patience of truth is not entirely baniſhed by ſelf-conceit.

The

The *Eſſay on Man* is the doctrine of fataliſm: yet the "way the twig is bent, the "tree's inclin'd," is a contrary poſition.

If Voltaire's *Candide* ſeems to bear hard on the goodneſs of providence, it was perhaps the reſult of one extreme begetting another. Of paradoxes, the former part of the twenty-ſecond verſe of the third chapter of Geneſis ſeems to preſent one; as the knowledge of good and evil may be deemed a fortunate circumſtance. Yet may it not be reſolved thus? That before their fall, Adam and Eve knew not, were unacquainted with the mixed condition of the world enſuing thereon; but had experienced nothing but good, unſophiſticated with evil. Or by the *knowledge of good and evil*, may perhaps be ſignified the *conceit and preſumption of ſuch knowledge*. As to the latter part of this verſe, it is beyond my reſolution; for to interpret it, that mankind, how brutal ſoever and *like the beaſts that periſh*, will not be immortal; or that the wicked will not be ſo, though a ſeemingly deſirable thing; and that *many*

are called, but few choſen, with ſome few other texts, may be underſtood in ſuch a ſenſe, ſeems heterodox and raſh. And that Mrs. Piozzi's expreſſion of our author's excellence beyond *periſhable beings*, is to be ſo underſtood, is an idea ſtill more extravagant.

Concerning the acute hypercriticiſms on on Pope's *Epitaphs*, which are properly no part of this biography, I will, however, aſk how our author knew that " peace to thy " gentle ſhade," was fiction? and add one or two ſmall remarks.

In the laſt line of the epitaph on Fenton, the poet ſays that he

" Thank'd Heaven that he had liv'd, and that he dy'd."

Now Terence tells us not to believe a woman when dead, but has not informed us concerning the credit due to a dead man returning thanks for dying. In criticiſing that on Sir Iſaac Newton, it is diſcovered that *night* and *light* are too nearly allied.

As I am fond of repeating excellence, I am convinced that the reader will not be diſpleaſed at my ſetting down that of Ben. Johnſon, which alone would have rendered him immortal, though the name of the lady is not recited ;—

Underneath this marble hearſe
Lies the ſubject of all verſe,
Sydney's ſiſter, Pembroke's mother.
Death, e'er thou haſt kill'd another,
Fair and virtuous, good as ſhe,
Time ſhall throw his dart at thee.

Of theſe ſix lines it is almoſt criminal to complain of the concluſion of the ſenſe at the third line, the half of the piece. There were originally ſix more lines as follows, in the laſt of which the thought is ſomewhat far fetched :

Marble piles let no man raiſe
To her name; for after days
Some kind woman, born as ſhe,
Reading this, like Niobe
Shall turn ſtatue, and become
Both her mourner and her tomb.

To anticipate a little: this charming piece puts me in mind of Ambroſe Philips's incomparable tranſlation of the two fragments of Sappho, which our biographer has omitted to notice, not becauſe he could not ſay any thing good of them, but for the contrary reaſon, in conjunction with two others; that the ſubject was love, and Philips was a Whig; and of Atterbury's fine tranſlation of the third Ode of the fourth Book of Horace, which yet is not faultleſs. The firſt line of the fifth ſtanza, though very beautiful, is a little defective, in that the emphaſis, without ſome exertion in reading, falls on *the*. In the firſt line of the laſt ſtanza, *eaſe* is evidently uſed, not for the ſenſe but rhyme: and to "cygnets "dying accents raiſe," is, I think, obſcure to thoſe unacquainted with the original. The meaning is, that the goddeſs can raiſe the muſic of fiſhes to that of dying ſwans, which is indeed none at all.

Our author has obſerved, that according to Dr. Warton, in his *Eſſay on the Genius and writings of Pope, that poet had conſulted*

the

the myſtic writers, a claſs totally different and contradictory to the myſterious; the former being of a mercurial, the latter of a leaden genius. In a conjectural view of the myſtics, I ſhall only add, that as there is a falſe enthuſiaſm and a true, ſo there is probably a falſe myſticiſm and a true; and that reaſon ſhould be the mediator to both, leſt enthuſiaſm ſhould run into extravagance on the one hand, or immaleable orthodoxy into ſluggiſhneſs on the other; and ſimilarly, leſt faith ſhould either run into an allegorical labyrinth, or, on the contrary, be immerſed in a dead letter. I know not whether I myſelf ought to be deemed a myſtic, were I to attribute coincidences not infrequently regarded as plagiariſms, to the agency of inviſible beings, which might poſſibly give riſe to the creation of the Muſes, &c. Certain it is, that writers have been accuſed of ſtealing from authors whom they have never read.

THOMSON.

" AN enumeration of examples to prove
" a poſition which nobody denied,
" was from the beginning ſuperfluous, and
" muſt quickly grow diſguſting."

True; but was not our author himſelf actuated by diſguſting diſlike to the very liberty in queſtion? at leaſt, had not his principles ſuch a tendency? It ſeems certain, that they would never have looſened the ſhackles of any tyranny or ſuperſtition.

" The benevolence of Thomſon was fer-
" vid, but not active. He would give, on
" all occaſions, what aſſiſtance his purſe
" would ſupply;" (a noble character indeed! and I believe poets may challenge all mankind for generoſity;) " but the of-
" fices of intervention, or ſolicitation, he
" could not conquer his ſluggiſhneſs ſuffi-
" ciently to perform;"—ſeems, if we may believe

believe Mrs. Piozzi, an exact portrait of of Johnſon himſelf, who likewiſe ſeems to have been like Thomſon, " conſcious of " his own character." And let me obſerve, that a perſon cannot be ſo much blamed for a careleſſneſs towards others exemplified in his own affairs; that even a neglect of religion is in ſome meaſure excuſable by that of worldly concerns.

" The gaiety of *Spring*, the ſplendour of " *Summer*, the tranquillity of *Autumn*, and " the horror of *Winter*." This is ſuccinct and beautiful; and yet the writer of theſe remarks prefers the horrors of Winter, eſpecially when aggravated by a rough ocean. It is true, that of the ſcenes, ſhipwrecks are the natural conſequence; but what moment paſſes unattended with calamities?

WATTS.

CONCERNING Watts's poetry, my opinion agrees with our author's — There is in it, I think, a happy, and ſometimes almoſt incomparable freedom of verſification, of ſpirit, and of piety; and it may be ſaid in his own words, that in his Odes

" A thouſand looſe Pindaric plumes fly
" ſcatt'ring down the wind."

Yet they are often too puritanical and tautologous; and I believe all his readers are wearied with his chariot, how well ſo-ever hung.

" Such he was as every Chriſtian Church
" would rejoice" (*would have rejoiced*, it ſhould have been) " to have adopted," is ſo candid a ſentence of the candid account of Watts, that I am inclined to forgive our biographer for ſome of his harſhneſſes, moved thereto by the friendly name of Sir Thomas

Thomas Abney, remembranced by Dr. Gibbons. Indeed Johnſon could not long ſurvive ſuch a mental reſolution. As to extemporary preaching, it is generally tautologous: yet I know not that ſome may not compoſe extemporaneouſly better than in their cloſets, as a running water ſparkles more than a ſtanding lake. As to the next paragraph, " He did not endeavour to aſſiſt " his eloquence by any geſticulations; for, " as no corporeal actions have any corre- " ſpondence with theological truth, he did " not ſee how they could enforce it."

If geſticulation, or any mode elſe, could convey a zeal for things ſacred or ſpiritual, and Chriſtian humility to the heart of man, it would, in a perſon of five-foot ſtature, hardly have that effect: but I cannot ſuppoſe our author ſerious in ſuggeſting, that moderate geſture, accompanying an oral vigour, can ever enforce it. Emphaſis and action may have naturally a general effect in imparting help to thought, the body to aſſiſt the ſoul, as the ſoul reciprocally affects the body, by imparting a peculiar unaccountable

accountable caſt of appearance to perſons of reſpective ſtations of life, affecting their manners partly perhaps by the different trains of thought current in their minds; or they may do it even by exciting attention. In the following pages, he commends Watts's "combating Locke at one time, "and at another, making a catechiſm for "children," though he had unluckily reprehended Milton for doing the like. But Watts, though a ſacred poet, was ſomehow his favourite; but Milton was not. He affirms indeed, in regard to ſacred poetry, that "it is ſufficient for Watts to have done "better than others, what no man has "done well." He had alleged juſt before, that the "paucity of topics of *devotional* "*poetry* enforces perpetual repetition," which is indeed not void of truth; and that the "ſanctity of the matter rejects the "ornaments of the figurative diction;" but he muſt have confeſſed that the Pſalmiſt and prophets ſeem to have afforded examples to the contrary.

OF

OF COLLINS'S

ODE on the Paſſions, which has perhaps obtained as much celebrity as it deſerves, nothing is ſaid. Our author obſerves, that this poet clogs his verſes with conſonants. And I obſerve that *Dyer* makes free with grammar, particularly in rendering neutral or intranſitive verbs, tranſitive.

As to Collins's application to bookſellers, and promiſing a verſion of Ariſtotle's *poetics:* it is to be lamented that men of genius ſhould be reduced to the neceſſity of mortgaging their brains, and that ſums ſo ſmall can be taken upon them. Indeed our author lifts the veil too much from the myſtery of book-making; diſcrediting it, and rendering it in a manner contemptible.

AS

AS TO SHENSTONE,

JOHNSON's and his mind were ſo diametrically oppoſite, that they were like the elephant and rhinoceros; and in the ſtory of the wooden book, Johnſon choſe rather to burleſque learning than to omit ſo idle a jeſt: nevertheleſs, of the two, it muſt be admitted, that Shenſtone was at leaſt as far removed from being a piece of timber as himſelf, who a little reſembled King Log. For as to the ſtanzas of Shenſtone, "to which" (ſays Johnſone) "if any "mind denies its ſympathy, it has no ac- "quaintance with love or nature;"—the reader ſhould be informed, that it is ſaid that he had no perception of their beauty till it was pointed out to him; but whether the ſketches exhibited by him for laying out pleaſure-grounds were his, I know not. Shenſtone brings to mind Tickell's lines addreſſed to Addiſon:

"Ne'er was to the bow'rs of bliſs convey'd
"A purer ſpirit, or more welcome ſhade."—

which

which however were, I ſuppoſe, too mythological for our author. Be that as it might, the concluding criticiſm is really cruel: but it is beyond the power of Johnſon's libel on this tender poet, Hammond, Gray, &c. of his ironical commendation of Addiſon, as himſelf has given out, or of any pedagogue's contempt, to deſtroy their reputation; although he introduces Gray with his knotted club to knock down the gentle Shenſtone, to be himſelf knocked down at laſt by our blind Polypheme in the wantonneſs of his might. He makes Lyttelton too give him a ſtroke, in the ſpirit of him who furniſhed the monkies with clubs to belabour one another for his diverſion.

The Doctor, as always, ſickens at the idea of any thing rural. Were it not vain to argue againſt a perſon who poſſeſſed but three out of the five ſenſes, being deſtitute of that of taſte and ſight, one might have aſked him who wrote *London*, whether great cities do not afford ſomething ſickening, diſtreſſing,

diſtreſſing, or horrible, at every ſtep by day or by night. Too true it is, that the ſavageneſs of mankind renders rural, as well as other ſcenes, often ſickening and odious; but the ſcenes of paſtoral may be ſuppoſed to be laid in Arcadia, or rather indeed in fancied Arcadia. But if we will not in this admit fiction allowed to every kind of poetry, but inſiſt on truth, ancient, or perhaps ſome modern, realities may afford ſome ſatisfaction. It may not be impoſſible, that as the belief of the true God has always been preſerved in ſome corner of the world, ſo the genuine ſimplicity of nature may have never been quite extinct. But otherwiſe, the paſtoral poet may revert to the ſtate of man before the fall. At all times grazing flocks are certainly a pleaſing ſight: though, in modern times, thoſe who deem themſelves of the better ſort, annex, like the loweſt of mankind whom they nevertheleſs deſpiſe, no idea of entertainment to the proſpect of them, but ſordidneſs: they, I will not ſay, like our biographer, have not the leaſt reliſh of nature as it is ſolely God's.

God's. If, according to a remark of Pope's, in his eſſay on paſtoral, only the pleaſing objects of rural life ſhould be preſented to view, that of a ſhepherd in Britain at this day has agreeable circumſtances. Let one figure to himſelf a fine ſpring morning; the ſun riſing over a diſtant hill, beſpangling the wide ſurrounding lawn with pearl, the harmleſs ſmiling flocks cropping it, and the lark ſinging over his head, whilſt perhaps the thoughts of his fair one attunes his own voice to the carrol and the ſong. If moreover he has a genius for verſe, or muſic to entertain his long leiſure, the compariſon with ſequeſtered ſcenes of Arcadia will not ſeem prepoſterous. But withal, the reader of paſtoral, as of romance, may pleaſe himſelf with the natural congenial idea of a future immortal ſtate, realizing, and more than realizing, the ſweet tranquil deſcriptions of Arcadian and Elyſian vales, or of golden caſtles and ivory gates turning to angelic harmony, ſuch as it never entered the imagination of poet to conceive. Regarding the paſtoral of romance, as better

than

than paſt, as prophetic of what is to come; of, for ought we know, Paradiſe Regained, when the thoughts of the butcher ſhall not mingle with the ſight of the flocks and herds.

YOUNG.

YOUNG.

THIS learned (lawyers are always learned) imitator of Johnſon, has been particularly ſucceſsful in grammatical inverſion and perſonification. Yet his figure of *dipping the pen in poetry*, ſeems broken; he ſhould have ſaid, *into the inkſtand of poetry*: and his ſimile of *ſailing from the ſhore*, ſeems ſpoiled in dreſſing. Inſtead of "it only "appears that the ſhore alſo recedes," it would have been better, *it is the ſame thing as if the ſhore receded.*

From the letter of the Archbiſhop to Dr. Young, it appears, that times were altered in the days of Thomas Secker, from what they were in thoſe of Thomas à Becket. Dr. Young, who, with a genius comprehenſive and ſublime, joined real piety with parade; ſome fire with more ſmoke; ſome ſenſe with much wit; ſome meaning with more fuſtian; and ſome ſmoothneſs with an abundance of rigidneſs; moſt excelled,

if that may be termed excelling, in amplifying his thoughts, and twiſting them into a thouſand ſhapes.

MALLET.

MALLET

SEEMS to have been a miniſterial tool.

AS TO AKENSIDE,

I SHALL put him off with a remark on the "*idle queſtion*," as it is termed by Johnſon, who, himſelf, I think, quibbles in oppoſing truth and ridicule one to the other, by miſtaking the queſtion; whereas truth may lie in either ridicule or ſeriouſneſs, is general. Truth is the thing ſought, but the queſtion is how to find it. Moreover, that which is grounded thereon need not fear ridicule; but that which is not, is liable to the probe of ſatire, though not indeed of capricious merriment. And with tranſlating for the benefit of the unlearned reader—the Latin ſcrap applied to him:

Pars minima iſt ipſa Puella ſui.

To Akenſide's ſmooth verſe, not ſenſe, we ſtoop;
As Miſs is not conſpicuous, but her hoop.

GRAY.

GRAY AND LYTTELTON.

THIS biography may be compared to the Catullian *Epigram*, which has its venom diffuſed throughout; yet it is ſo pointed in its tail, by the ſeverity exerciſed to Lyttelton and Gray, that it has alſo conſiderable reſemblance to the *Epigram* of Martial.

Lord Lyttelton, who, though once chancellor of the exchequer, could not, according to an aſſertion in the letters aſcribed to his ſon, count twenty, was in common with the great Duke of Marlborough, the Earl of Godolphin, his friend Mr. Pitt, Lord Holland, and other apoſtates, originally a Tory, and careſſed by Swift and that party. By the way, nothing is ſo irkſome as the precipitate wrongheadedneſs and blindneſs of faction. Who would believe that Lord Mansfield, clamoured againſt for being a Tory and Jacobite, to have been placed at the head of the Kings Bench by

George II. in the miniſtry of the Duke of Newcaſtle? And here juſtice ought to be done to our author's political ideas, how much ſoever exploded, that violent Whigs are not always ready to grant that liberty which they claim. On the contrary, their views are to raiſe themſelves at the expence of monarchy; not to promote inferiors to a participation of the ſame franchiſes with themſelves, but to pull down their ſuperiors to their own level: whilſt none are fonder of ruling, none are more impatient of obedience.

To ſpeculate a little: It muſt be granted that Gray, for inſtance, poſſeſſed a larger field of knowledge and of genius than Lyttleton; and that even leſſer Shenſtone poſſeſſed a fine one; yet how different their circumſtances?—the one a Lazarus, begging for the crumbs that fell from the other's table. It is true, that his Lordſhip, like his friend Lord Chatham, poſſeſſed a ſhare of Attic wit, and belonged to the univerſe of letters, as well as to the world of politics. But Mr. Pitt's knowledge was much con-

fined

fined to politics, the very reaſon of his reaching to ſuch eminence in his own country; whilſt an extended, diffuſed walk of ſcience avails little at home, though eventually much more important.

Men who would figure in their own time and country, in preference to laſting and general fame, muſt, for the moſt part, apply themſelves to that which peculiarly belongs to it; to preſent, local, and municipal concerns, reſembling topical medicines and the concentration of a focus, to which abilities, rather than genius, are conducive. Again, of abilities there are two kinds, the one reſident in the head, and the other in the forehead: a happy union of which is excellently calculated for parchments and the bar, both hateful to elegant genius, and is that which has raiſed many to the ſummit of the law, to be remembered no where but in reports, a twelvemonth after their death. Yet perſons of higher genius ſhould apply themſelves principally to one ſpecies of ſtudy. It may not be inviduous to obſerve of Mr. Pitt, minor, that

his genius is quite different from his father's, and wanted not the chicanery of a rudimental education in the law to render him a Jeſuit.

But our author's remarks on Gray are not without ſome foundation; particularly that his language is encumbered and harſh; and that his poetry was in a manner the effect of induſtry and perſeverance. The *Bard* in particular is too artificial as oppoſed to natural; involved in complications of figures, forced with tautologies, diſtorted by inverſions, and disjointed by parentheſes and full points; and, to carry on the metaphor, raiſed or roughened with fret work into falſe, or at leaſt not true, ſublime. The *Progreſs of Poeſy*, a pretty antique word deſpiſed by Johnſon, and even his ſlighter pieces have likewiſe a ſtiffneſs to which Pindar had certainly no recourſe, and from which Dryden's ode is entirely exempt. Gray owes much to ſcowering, as does Virgil to wire-drawn epithets; whilſt Milton cramps with hard words and eccentricates by tranſpoſition, (remarkable therefore it

is,

is, that *Paradiſe Loſt* and Young's *Night Thoughts* are read by all ſorts of people; the former doubtleſs for its extravagance, and the latter for its ſoothing melancholy,) and Shakeſpeare often borders on fuſtian, but his thoughts uſually keep pace with his language. Milton's natural paſſages are the beſt, and moſt reſemble Homer; and are thoſe which approach neareſt to the ſacred writings, whence his hints are chiefly drawn.

I will add ſome diſtinct remarks on ſome of Gray's pieces, after obſerving that he has made very free with the writings of others; and juſt mentioning that Johnſon has made *it* the pronoun to *profeſſor*.

Proſpect of Eton College:—

"The captive linnet which enthrall?"

is tautologous: and ſurely "Gay hope—"poſſeſt" ſavours of nonſenſe, though the object of hope may indeed be poſſeſſed. In the *Progreſs of Poetry*:—Should not "Glory "purſue" be rather *Glory purſues?* Of the

Bard,

Bard, the fourteenth line would be far better, *Cried Mortimer to arms*,—than "To "arms cried Mortimer"—which is very lame.

"Struck the deep ſorrows of his lyre,"

is a harſh, laboured complication of figures, and there is a further jumble of *ſtriking with a maſter's fire*. *Struck his deeply ſorrowing lyre* would be ſolemn, yet ſimple. It may be obſerved, that what owes its beauty to contrivance, often appears to be without it, the texture of the workmanſhip being leſs viſible in a poliſhed than an unpoliſhed work. "He reſts among the dead" does not accord with the tenor of the text.

"Heard ye the din of battle bray?"

is rather an odd queſtion. A battle may be figuratively ſaid to bray; but *din of battles braying*, the *braying* of the *braying*, is a curious *aſſiſm*. And *he*, in the laſt line, is ſuperfluous, inſerted to fill the meaſure. Of the *Fatal Siſters*, the third and fourth ſtanzas would be better if tranſpoſed. In the

the *Fragment*, *hiding* and *riding* ſpoil the uniformity of the metre.

In the firſt ſtanza of the *Elegy*, he talks of darkneſs, and in the third it is moonlight; indeed ſhe might have riſen in the mean time. In the ſeventh, *yielding to the ſickle*, is but a poor expreſſion; and the furrow itſelf is the broken earth. The twelfth is very excellent. In the twenty-firſt "*ſpelt* " by the unletter'd Muſe" ſavours of a bull; and " peep of dawn" in the twenty-ſecond, of burleſque, into which " bubbles" in the following one might be alſo conſtrued.

As to " the character of the Elegy," Johnſon rejoices " to concur with the com-
" mon reader; for," adds he, " by the
" common ſenſe of readers uncorrupted
" with literary prejudices, after all the re-
" finements of ſubtlety and the dogmatiſm
" of learning, muſt be finally decided all
" claim to poetical honours." To which may be added, that all worldly altercations will then ceaſe, and that the mould of the church-yard will ſatisfy us with earth, a

contemplation

contemplation odious to its ſordid ſons, who abhor nothing ſo much as the thoughts of any thing above it. Our author, in avoiding Scylla, founders on Charybdis; is, in cenſuring the moſt part of the poetry of Gray, compelled to paſs a panegyric on ſome of it, and on ſome of Shenſtone's. However, I apprehend, a degree at leaſt of refinement neceſſary to conſtitute judgment in poetry; for as to the common people, they have no idea of any compoſition but of fun or narrative, and, like boys, prefer the immaturity of traſh to found productions; and yet, as I have obſerved, they are fond of Milton's poems, becauſe narrative, and containing wild indigeſted ſtories.

CONCLUSION.

CONCLUSION.

THESE Lives, which furniſh the literary of a century, and contain many good morſels of criticiſm, &c. may be named with Plutarch's, on account of the veins of pleaſantry interſperſed; but if we compare the numerous apothegms recorded by Plutarch, with the few recited by Johnſon, we ſhall find our author's greatly ſuperior, and be apt to conclude that both Plutarch's heroes and himſelf entertained but an indifferent notion of repartee. Theſe two great biographers alſo reſemble each other in poſſeſſing a conſiderable ſpice of the old woman.

The characteriſtics of Dr. Johnſon were general and extenſive claſſical erudition, ſtrong ſenſe, and accurate obſervation; which ſeaſoned with dry humour and ſly detraction, rather than Dryden's free, and Pope's pungent wit, have rendered his claſſical erudition equally immortal. Strange,

and

and a pity it was, that with his great qualities, he, or rather his poſthumous editors, ſhould make the world the confeſſor of his weakneſſes, and of his methodiſm, commixed as they were with literary butchery and ſavageneſs. Indeed his character conſiſted of contradictions. Though his piety was great, and he feared not man, but God, nor any dangers of death, yet he trembled at the thoughts of it. His piety was of the kind, that, haughty and arrogant as it was, would have held the world in the fetters of ſlavery and prieſtcraft, whilſt the precepts inculcated in theſe *lives* run counter both to divinity and chriſtian morality. He thought that every one but himſelf ſhould ſubmit to the great, whilſt he deſpiſed all men but Popes and Kings, and his father among the reſt. As his own character was inconſiſtent, ſo his countrymen, nine in ten of whom deſpiſed his principles, and nine in ten of the remainder his uncouth manner approaching to ſavageneſs, though he was enamoured of a ſmooth luxurious age, adored him. So devoted was he to the ways of the world,

that

that in this latter work, he, as Bacon ſays of Machiavel, taught rather what men do, than what they ought to do, as Bacon himſelf taught by example.

Of his works; though they have little of originality, and his ſtyle has a certain atrabiliouſneſs, and his tiſſue of paragraphs an unpleaſing quaintneſs, it muſt be confeſſed that his Dictionary, *Rambler*, and the two imitative tranſlations of Juvenal, &c. are very excellent; and that theſe *Lives of the Engliſh Poets* contain a fund of very valuable general criticiſm, and that his remarks on Pope's Epitaphs are ſingularly acute, and, for the moſt part, juſt. But the coarſeneſs of his conſtitution, his vigorous mind being perhaps vitiated or degraded by the groſsneſs of his body, vibrated not to the delicate touches of a Shenſtone and a Hammond, nor even to the ſtronger hand of a Gray, but gravitated by the weight of that in which it was incloſed to earth. Johnſon's feelings were more ordinary than fine, which indeed accounts for his popularity; more nervous than elevated; and I take Hawkeſ-

Hawkeſworth to have been at leaſt his equal in ſublimity, and that the author of the *Adventurer* deſerves one hiſtory of his life.

Johnſon was in literature what the firſt Pitt was in politics, both being alike rough and overbearing. And it would, methinks, be no diſagreeable ſpeculation for a moment, how ſuch violent ſpirits would have aſſorted on the national theatre? But, as according to Johnſon, Garrick was mute in a court of law, and the Lord Chief Juſtice would probably make but an indifferent figure on the ſtage, ſo it is probable that he, whoſe knowledge much exceeded Pitt's, would have borne the bell in converſation, as he eaſily did in the company of Cheſterfield, but would not have been a match for either in Parliament; though it is not likely that he would have brooked total ſilence, as did, according to report, the whole Houſe of Commons, at one period of Chatham's greatneſs. How was it at the club, of which Charles Fox and Burke were members? When the Doctor ridiculed Lord Mansfield for being the pack-horſe of the

law,

law, he might have remembered that himſelf had been a lexicographical pioneer.

Johnſon ſeldom writes to the fancy; nor viſibly ironically ſo as to diſcover ſuch a purpoſe to the reader; but in a continual jog-trot of didactic, allowing no holiday. He conſtantly addreſſes himſelf to the underſtanding; makes no excurſions into the regions of ſpirits, beyond "this viſible di-"urnal ſphere," nor eſſays knowledge denied to "ears of fleſh and blood;" nor even wiſhes to ſtray beyond the walks of mere modern life, back to the regions of Gothic fancy. His timid, impalpable, dreary religion permitted him not to expatiate in the field of hypotheſis and conjecture; reveries, vain, perhaps, yet amuſing; the food of the ſoul, and a refuge from the miſeries and calamities of life. Terribly afraid of free-thinking, though not hoſtile to free-eating, he immerſed in dogma and ſuperſtition, fearing to make uſe of reaſon as a mediator between extremes. He had the anxiety and yearning of the Pſalmiſt without the joy and exultation: ſuch as repel from a plea-

ſant contemplation of the Deity, and inſtead of imparting delight, make men ſhrink back from eternity, and exhibit the idea of death terrible; ſuch as pluck away the roſe buds of ideal hope from the hour of the ſeparation of ſoul and body, and point it only with thorns. But theſe maladies, and his other defects and faults, candour will partially ſet down to his frame of body, ill adapted to a perfect mind, and acknowledge him, with whoſe anecdotes the preſs teemed, to have been no inconſiderable perſon, but a great author, notwithſtanding his Dictionary is imperfect, his Rambler pompous, his Idler inane, his lives unjuſt, his poetry inconſiderable, his learning common, his ideas vulgar, his Irene a child of mediocrity, his genius and wit moderate, his precepts wordly, his politics narrow, and his religion bigoted.

A DREAM.

A DREAM.

AFTER having been occupied in perusing Dr. Warton's *Essay on the genius and writings of Pope*, and Dr. Johnson's *Lives of the English Poets*, the comparison I had made of those two eminent writers, presented to my mind the following vision:—According to my best recollection of the flitting scene, those Doctors, who frequented the same walk of classic literature, were in conversation with each other. The reader needs not to be informed, that in dreams, neither the preservation of the unities, nor the avoidance of anachronisms, are to be expected; and that inconsistencies and contradictions become natural when the soul and body are in a manner disunited and at variance.

Dr. Warton. Dr. Johnson, I give you joy of having finished your *Lives*.

Johnſon. *(ſtarting)* Sir, you don't imagine I am going to die?

Warton. No; I rather think you have rendered yourſelf immortal. *The Doctor is ſtill afraid of dying.*

Johnſon. Our opinions in many reſpects agree.

Warton. Aye, we agree in one great point, in our ſentiments of mankind, and in reprobating the opinion of thoſe who repreſent them as proud, ſelfiſh, or knaviſh; as in all my concerns I have met with none ſuch.

Johnſon. Envy, malignity, hatred of honeſty and virtue, mixture of pride and wantonneſs, contempt of the humble, and ſuperciliouſneſs to the unfortunate, with the reſt of the catalogue numerated by the ſatiriſts, have never fallen in my way, nor do I acquieſce in the cant, that church-men are lazy, or courtiers inſincere.

Warton. No, Sir; I dare ſay that, during your

your reſidence in London, you have rarely ſeen wealth haughty, or miſery inſulted, any more than thoſe reſident in the country have been witneſſes to oppreſſion; and it may be affirmed, that cruelty or callouſneſs belong not to mankind;—that, with a few exceptions, all men do as they would be done by; that there hardly exiſts an hypocritical patriot, ſaint, or divine; that a lawyer who prolongs a cauſe to the ruin of his client, or guardian who embezzles a ward's property, are monſters which the world never ſaw, or knows not of even in modern times; ſo that I am in great hopes that the Millenium is approaching, or rather returning. *O how glorious were the ancients, their writings and manners! O the Grecian ages!*

Johnſon. We alſo agree in making charitable allowances for the frailty of human nature, and you will teach that the greateſt crimes are to be regarded with a favourable eye, ſo that "the univerſe may be "bleſſed." *O what charming manners and times are the preſent!*

Warton. We agree that rough ſatire is improper and unpolite, and that the only method of curing vices is to tickle them; not to exaſperate the offenders, for I would as ſoon mention hell to the Houſe of Lords, as write a ſevere ſatire; and, in fact, whatever mankind are made of, it is highly wrong to propagate unwelcome truths; and, next to Wincheſter, I regard diſſimulation as the beſt ſchool.

Johnſon. Sir, you are right; and you plainly ſee, that ſince my circumſtances have been altered, I have retracted my *Juvenal* and *Rambler*, and even half abjured the Pretender.

Warton. Aye, 'twas poor ſleeping on a bulk with Savage.

Johnſon. Sir, you would not have gotten a good living by ſtickling hard for religion. But we wander from our ſubject, which was criticiſm. Sir, you and I reſemble each other in our perambulations of the walks of literature.

Warton.

Warton. And yet, like other doctors, we differ. You want taſte, Sir.

Johnſon. Sir, you want ſenſe.

Warton. Pardon me, Sir, I did not mean to offend you: indeed you have too much ſenſe;—I mean too little fancy, and no ſublimity of imagination.

Johnſon. Sir, I have more taſte and imagination than you. If you had any at all, you would have diſcerned the excellence of Pope's ſimile of the Alps in his Eſſay on Criticiſm.

Warton. Pardon me, you have no taſte for the ancients.

Johnſon. Sir, I like a modern dinner better than one dreſſed for Heliogabalus.

Warton. I am not ſpeaking of their cookery, but of their writings, which ought to be a model to all poſterity. They unite ſimplicity with invention, and have ſtrength

without point; and do not, I mean the true claſſics, affect ſmartneſs.

Johnſon. Sir, you have no wit, and therefore decry it; nor any highflown genius, as you would fancy. And where are the etherial imaginations in the greateſt of the ancients, ſuch as we find in Shakeſpeare, and Milton's Miſcellanies? And in ſcience, the ancients were mere idiots. What do you think of the notion of the ſtars being ſtones, ſnatched up into the ſkies, exhibited in that chaos of nonſenſe named *Plutarch's Morals?*

Warton. You, Doctor, are an affected humouriſt, and aim at dryneſs, flyneſs, and archneſs: your ideas and morality are debauched with vulgarity, which I was aſhamed of even in the *Adventurer*, wherein, you know Hawkeſworth's province was chiefly novel and romance; mine, criticiſm; and yours, moral obſervations, in which, but not ſo much as in your *Lives*, you rivet in the minds of people worldly regards, which it is always as difficult to wrench from them

as

as their ſouls from their bodies: and your ſtyle is not a claſſic, Attic vein, but patched with wittineſs; for the true import of *Attic wit* is not wittineſs, much leſs witticiſm, but rather ſimply *Attic thought*, according to Webb in his *Literary Amuſements*;—

" Come, Hooker, with thee let me dwell on a phraſe
" Uncorrupted by wit, unambitious of praiſe:
" Thy language is chaſte, without aims or pretence;
" 'Tis a ſweetneſs of breath from a ſoundneſs of ſenſe."

Johnſon. Sir, I yield to no man in theſe qualities. But your Engliſh patterns of ſimplicity, Hooker, Raleigh, and Bacon, have ſhrewd ſentences; nor are the Scripture-writers, the beſt ancients of all, without them. Homer wrote an heroi-comical poem; and his and Virgil's ſtaple works are not ſtrangers to point. Some ſalt, ſome zeſt is requiſite. I ſeaſoned my productions, and they ſold. And, Sir, let me tell you, your adoration of Paganiſm is no honour to Chriſtianity. Sir, I am more aſhamed of you.

Warton. Homer, though his ſpeakers might naturally

naturally brandiſh ſometimes the ſpear of wit, he was far above modern wittineſs. As to your fling about Paganiſm, if you embrace Mahometaniſm, why ſhould not I Paganiſm, Doctor?

Johnſon. Nor did Homer, like you in your Eſſay on Pope, go out of his way to tell all he knew, a brag of every one that had ſpoken to him.

Warton. Nor keep a toad-eater to retail his ſcraps. Pardon me, you are a plagiary.

Johnſon. I a plagiary? Gentle ſhepherd, tell me where?

Warton. From my Eſſay on Pope: particularly you copied my critique on the *Dunciad*.

Johnſon. Becauſe you was a *dunce*. But you only anticipated me in my *Lives* what we had talked over; ſo that you are in effect the plagiary.

Warton.

Warton. Punning is not arguing. But it is no wonder that a jingler loves puns. I a dunce! I'll ſue you for deſtroying my ſchool, and make your ghoſtſhip enter an appearance, as Judge Buller did Lord George Gordon.

Johnſon. Aye, his Lordſhip was too hard for Buller.—Ha, ha, ha! The law is hardly rhyme or reaſon. As to rhymes, Sir, the want of quantities in Engliſh makes rhyme neceſſary, and the redundant ſyllables admitted at the ends of blank lines, deſtroy their uniformity.

Warton. Rhymes and point are fit only for children; and are as much inferiour to blank verſe, as a round peal to the various modulations of changes, or a wilderneſs of ſweets to a parterre; yet blank verſe is not without uniformity.

Johnſon. What were Cicero's puns fit for? Sir, parterres are more ſtriking than ſerpentine walks; and with all your taſte of antiques, rhyme reſembles the Grecian architecture,

chitecture; yet both have modulation, and blank verſe the Gothic; and in didactic poetry, rhyme confers a mathematical conciſeneſs and clearneſs. What more ſtriking than the lines of a regiment in equal rank and file?

Warton. That is not denied; but you have no genius nor taſte for the variegated face of nature, and her wild wood-notes, though yourſelf a ſavage.

Johnſon. A pedagogue talk of genius! Sir, Nature is regular.

Warton. And ſo has blank verſe regularity. You are both a pedagogue and a dictionary-maker; no better than a literary pioneer; and withal, according to Horne Tooke, without one qualification for philoſophy. Indeed, I believe that Lowth's examples in his little grammar, have contributed to correct writing more than your huge work; but his Lordſhip fares with him no better than you.

Johnſon.

Johnſon. Sir, you talk of Lowth and grammar, who know not that *nor*, not *or*, is the correſpondent of *neither**. As to the dog Tooke, with all his conceit, houſes and ſhips have many partitions, though huts and canoes have none; and what has he ſaid that we did not know before; this would be procruſtes?

Warton. Pardon, pardon, Doctor; you know that three quarters of modern language are factitious, or fictitious, though we were all appriſed of many words being ſo; but enough of him. The ſlip you attribute to me might be an error of the preſs, and you confound *as* and *ſo*. But what could poſſeſs you ſo capriciouſly to abuſe together with Gray, Hammond, Ambroſe, Phillips, &c. Prior, who was of your own kidney? But, alas! indeed, the tender pathetic affections of the heart, humane as yours was in many reſpects, had no charms for you, no more than had "ſtrains of

* In Warton's Eſſay on Pope, we find "They *neither* "ſeek *or* expect.' And in the ſame page, 212, "*Neither* "Spencer *or* Milton."

"higher

" higher mood." Nature's grand features, and imagery of her own picturesque pencil, the tempest-beaten shore, the cormorant buffeting with the whistling howling wind, or the screaming eagle, have no charms for you; you was incapable of sublime reverie, and nearly of love.

Johnson. Sir, I was in love with Tetty. But what possessed yourself to decry Hill and Addison, and to consider those as really vermin who were branded in the *Dunciad*, which was by a flirt of wit to annihilate writers, such as Quarles and Bentley, who may nevertheless live as long as its author himself? According, Sir, to your boasted taste, the *Campaigne*, which is devoid of point, is descriptive and particular, should, instead of being denominated a gazette in rhyme, have received your strong approbation: and Aaron Hill was as humane and friendly a man as any living. As to your representation of Addison, as of a poetical fancy, but unhappy in vesting it in verse, it is vain and false; his lines, particularly the versification of his *Rosamond*, which is

enchanting

enchanting and various, being generally harmonious. But his wit, though pleaſing and brilliant, wanted the force of that of Pope, and of Juvenal, whom, with Martial, you ſtrangely pretend to deſpiſe. On the contrary, Sir, a ſmooth ſilver knife will never penetrate to the core of vice; but it muſt be the rough edge of more powerful metal, wielded with a ſtrong hand. The tickle of Horace and Addiſon will but make both the reader and offender laugh, and, therefore, they ſeldom more than rallied follies; and indeed a turn-coat and debauchee, like Horace, could do more with an ill grace. Sir, I have not always written my mind.

Warton. We have no turn-coats in theſe days, Doctor; nor many maſters of ſeraglios.

Johnſon. Sir, I am no turn-coat. I am a Tory, and would not have accepted of a penſion from Whigs; yet if I had kept a ſeraglio, my ladies ſhould not have been confined; they ſhould have been Whigs.

Warton.

Warton. Ha, ha, ha!—You defend yourſelf againſt the charge well, I muſt confeſs, againſt the change of your coat. But, harkee, Doctor; a great coat is the beſt of all, ha, ha, ha!

Johnſon. I am glad you have given me a ſample of Horatian at laſt; but not equal to your brother's, when he ſaid a dubb'd brewer was a Knight of Malta.

Warton. But, Doctor, how came you to adviſe the Scotch Lords to become rebels?

Johnſon. Argyle did ſo before me, or made them ſo by intercepting their addreſs to George I. and after he had raiſed them, laid them; but the King afterwards found him out, and deprived him of his commiſſions.

Warton. You ought to be hanged for what you ſaid in the Hebrides; and for ſaying that George I. cared nothing about his crown, meaning, that he regarded only his Hanoverian farm, peſtered by Hanoverian rats, according to the Jacobite cant.

Johnſon.

Johnſon. And you ought to be whipped, old Eſau, for letting Tom ſeize the butt of ſack;—

The Doctor, ſweet Doctor, is left in the lurch,
By the dealer in laurel, the dealer in birch.

Ha, ha, ha! Were it not for *ifs* and *buts*, you would have been a poet, ha, ha, ha!

Warton. But you would not.

Johnſon. Sir, I am a better poet than you; though, becauſe you have been in Italy, you think yourſelf poſſeſſed of Italian fancy. And it is to be regretted that Tommy, who ſo well diſtinguiſhed Agincourt from Creſſi, is not a profeſſor of hiſtory; and then you might become laureat, and tickle Georgy's ears inſtead of boy's bums, ha, ha, ha!

Warton. (after a pauſe.) When I am laureat, I'll treat you with a glaſs of ſack, Doctor, to warm you on your bulk, unleſs you ſhould prefer gin, and the times were not changed; but we have agreed that the

world is always beneficent, and generous to thoſe in need.

Johnſon. So far from your depoſing him, he'll hardly bear a brother near his throne; and you reſemble the relatives of Eaſtern Princes, yet are a greater deſpot over children than the Sophi of Perſia.

Warton. Sir, *you* forſooth affect to be the Great Turk, though but a poetaſter. But don't you know, that birch bears mitres; and that then the head becomes our province, as we can turn our hands to any thing! A cap is better than bays.

Johnſon. Sir, a couplet of my Juvenal weighs more than any of your copies of verſes.

Warton. The Latins are to the Greeks, what the French are to the Italians, and as you are to Juvenal; all but imitators.

Johnſon. Sir, Juvenal was original, un-

leſs

lels Archilochus was his pattern, and my club* was as heavy as Juvenal's; but yours and your brother's pieces are but toys.

Warton. Seriouſly indeed, Doctor, neither of us are poets, and if there are any in Europe of the higher order, we muſt go, I believe, to the High Dutch, which language is not melted into refined inanity, and to which poetry is, in a manner, new. The Welch were ſublime bards.

Johnſon. There is ſomething in that. Do you think I have underſtood Greek?

Warton. I think that a Greek etymologiſt, as you have been, could hardly be ignorant of it. But Garrick, you know, could not play the gentleman; and Lord Mansfield is no great lawyer; and opinion, you know, is everlaſting, when once it has obtained. Men would die with envy, could

* I a little expected that Johnſon would ſerve Warton as he did Oſborn, but he only ſhook his oaken ſtaff at him.

not they find ſomething with which to teaſe eminence.

But, Doctor, I aſk your pardon; I, if not yourſelf, had really forgotten that you are dead. Pray, can you inform me of any circumſtances below? or, are ye all free-maſons?

Johnſon. That, Sir, is a very apt compariſon. I remember, that when I was dying, I graſped my *Rambler* in my right hand, which appeared like a ſheet anchor, (for death, in its heterogeneouſneſs and inconſiſtency, had the reſemblance to a dream); but my *Lives* I puſhed from me with my left, (let not Tommy pun and ſay, I could not retain my *life* any longer); and as to my dictionary, I thought to have uſed it for a pillow, but Mr. Tooke adviſed me to make a ſtocklog of it and warm myſelf with it, for indeed I was cold. The laſt circumſtance of this world that I remember, was a ſtrange mixture of words and things ſwimming before my ſight;

ſight*; and the firſt of the other was a wonder, whither I had been conveyed during my ſleep.

Warton. How long ago did it ſeem that you had died?

Johnſon. A very little while it ſeemed; but how long it really was, I know not. After awaking, as from a ſleep, it came acroſs me that I had been taken priſoner, and conveyed to Morocco; and conceived that a perſon who attended me was a Moor, and in order to ſoften his rigour, told him that I was an Engliſhman, and a friend to his Mooriſh Majeſty. Sir, ſays I, I am Doctor Samuel Johnſon, the greateſt man in the world, except your maſter and Lord Mansfield. Sir, ſays he, grinning a ghaſtly ſmile, we ſhall be very glad to ſee his Lordſhip, who has ſent ſome mortals here; but the King of Pruſſia ſent as many thouſands: but, added he, we are not Moors. I then

* According to the courſe of this account, as it appeared to me, I have placed only a ſemicolon between the two worlds, at the threſhold.

perceived that I was dead, and arrived in the ſhades below.

Warton. Did you then recollect about the world you had left?

Johnſon. Yes, Sir, the occurrences of my life ruſhed on me in a moſt lively and forcible view. The good actions I had done, or attempted, gave me ineffable delight; eſpecially when I beheld a huge mill into which oppreſſors were thrown to be grinded. I recollected again the *Rambler* and my *Devotions* with rapture, and my *Lives* again ſounded harſh diſſonance in my ears, whilſt my *Dictionary* and *Irene* were indifferent to me. But my *Politics*, in which I was ſincere, gave me ſatisfaction; and my penſion, the fruit, partly of them, and partly of my literary labours, gave me no regret, as I thought I deſerved hundreds better than did ſome others thouſands, as the poor ſhared it with me.

Warton. Literature muſt be there ſuperſeded

feded by intuition. But who was this perſon you was mentioning?

Johnſon. Sir, his name was *Curioſity*; a kind of Mercury to Pluto, who, accompanying *Report*, always attends new-comers of importance in perſon, whilſt ſome of their meſſengers attend all. *Curioſity* did not ſtand ſtill a moment, but put queſtions with rapidity equal to that with which a maid of honour inquires about a ball or a wedding, whilſt *Report* was alike impatient to run away with the news.

Warton. I ſhould have expected that *Fame* would have attended *you*, Doctor.

Johnſon. Sir, he always ſends *Report* before. I inquired of *Curioſity* concerning the ſtate of thoſe regions, the manners, cuſtoms, policy, diverſions, &c. all which have a near reſemblance with thoſe of this world, inſomuch that I am convinced of the earth being a colony of thoſe regions, and that it will never revolt from the mother-country, though there may be ſome few diſaffected

 perſons.

perſons. *Curioſity* informed me, that it was computed by Pluto, who is ſeldom miſtaken in regard to mankind, that were it in their power, they would be as unwilling to overturn his empire, as would the French to deſtroy the Engliſh ſmuggling-towns: however, he muſt certainly over-rate his authority on earth, in his calculation that there is not above one ſtrictly honeſt man in a hundred thouſand, and not above one in a thouſand who goes to public worſhip for the ſake of religion; and that he is in great hopes that many ſquint towards him.

Warton. But did not you contradict this, who had ſo good an opinion of mankind?

Johnſon. I did: but whether I had not ſufficiently recovered myſelf to collect my arguments, or however it was, I had but little ſucceſs. On my affirming that Pluto was egregiouſly vain and miſtaken, *Curioſity* put theſe queſtions to me:—How many perſons in England would commute, by reſigning religion, on condition of being excuſed paying tythe? how many gentlemen had

religion

religion nearer their hearts than their eſtates, or their game? and at laſt he aſked me if I knew of an honeſt man? When I anſwered haſtily, that I knew many of all theſe, he coolly bade me reckon them up, on which I ſaw numbers of mighty good ſort of people flitting before me and vaniſhing. However, they did not all diſappear, and I perceived King George III. remaining. But vexed to ſee the honeſty of ſuch numbers come to nothing, I aſked him what he thought of Mr. Hanway and of Mr. Howard; on which the infernal dominions ſeemed to ſhake around me, and *Curioſity* ſaying ſomething about the Man of Roſs, Dr. Walwyn, a Prebendary of Canterbury, and the preſent Mr. John Knox, being for a moment put to a nonplus; I proceeded to enquire in what diverſions the infernal inhabitants paſſed their time? O, ſays he, in cock-throwing, cock-fighting, bull-baiting, and ſporting; chiefly ſevering the heads of animals from their bodies, with chiſels diſcharged from flat-barrelled guns, their mode of ſhooting. You are hardly aware how greatly Pluto is gratified, that, next to

wh—g,

wh—g, all the people of Europe's higheſt gratification is to perſecute and deſtroy innocent animals; and that even biſhops follow it, and the generality of the clergy do little elſe. Then I have heard him boaſt, that there are European cooks as expert in torturing animals as any in his dominions; and that the ſlave-trade does his heart good to think of it; and that the Engliſh Eaſt and Weſt Indies hold immediately of his crown. Then again, the Courts of Inquiſition, of Chancery, and the Spiritual Court, he ſays, are his own; and, jokingly ſays, that Charon himſelf is not more bluff than the preſent Ch———r, nor his watermen more dilatory than the maſters.

Warton. Did he ſay nothing of the dilatorineſs of theatrical managers and bookſellers, when authors wanted money?

Johnſon. Yes, Sir; he ſaid that Pluto boaſted that bookſellers deſpiſed learned men, as all monied men do curates, and lords do biſhops. But there I was even with him: I told him that were not ſcholars poor,

poor, they would not write at all; and that if rich ones were to write at all, it would be in favour of tyranny and ariſtocracy; that were not the generality of authors beggars, the chief advantage of literature, the diſſemination of liberty and of the equality of mankind, would be loſt: on which my companion confeſſed that Pluto ſometimes ſhook his head at obſerving, that good ſeemed ſometimes to ſpring from evil, and put on a grave face.

Warton. But it does not follow thence, that private vices are public benefits, as I have obſerved.

Johnſon. No, Sir: had mankind, free agent, never fallen, there would have been no occaſion for good to ariſe out of evil, nor for intermediate evil; but all would have been always right in this world, as we ſhould now hope it will be eventually, and that the prior lapſe of the angels will be alſo recovered.

Warton. I perceived, Doctor, that your journey

journey to the Lowlands without your body, has, as might be expected, improved your metaphyſics.

Johnſon. Sir, I was always a metaphyſician.

Warton. And a politician. Let me know ſomething about politics.

Johnſon. Ha, ha, ha! You remember Sir Fletcher Norton's and Beckford's ſpeeches to the King. Soon after the arrival of the latter below, he, fancying Pluto like a king of this world, got a remonſtrance carried up to him, and replied to his Majeſty's anſwer; and what do you think was the conſequence?

Warton. I am all attention.

Johnſon. Hey, hey! What, what's this? rejoined Pluto, and clapped a hot coal into his mouth; at which, *Caught a Tartar!* *Caught a Tartar!* echoed through all the infernal caverns; ha, ha, ha!

Warton.

Warton. Ha, ha, ha! The Highlands have not furniſhed Boſwell with ſo pleaſant an anecdote; ha, ha, ha! Apropos, let me know ſomething of the ſtate of politics below. If that is Pluto's manner of ſerving patriots, I apprehend there are but few.

Johnſon. And they would be equally ſcarce in England, had we an Henry VIII. in which caſe they would not be quite ſo loquacious, but would more reſemble thoſe over the water; but as much as I diſlike them, I wiſh for no Henry VIIIth's, nor Duke of Brunſwick's neither.

Warton. Indeed the Dutch are very ill uſed; for it is certain that the Stadtholder brought his ill uſage partly on himſelf by his uſurping influence, by which the government had been ſilently undermined, and is now blown up. His lady is very artful; and they indeed ſo headſtrong and haſty as not to ſee the trap laid for them in her pretended journey, much like the Czarina's towards Turkey, whilſt the diſturbances in

the

the Auſtrian Netherlands, and with the French Parliament, ſtrongly contributed to the triumph of the Stadtholder, and the plauſible pretence that the patriots were the tools of France, contributed ſtrongly to it alſo. Indeed the politics of France, by being in a manner too ſucceſsful, have turned out the reverſe: her intention being probably no more than to embaraſs Britain, by ſtirring up diſſentions in the Thirteen American States; not to eſtabliſh a Proteſtant independency; and likewiſe only to divide the Dutch, to acquire ſomething in the ſcramble, whilſt, by a peculiar concurrence of circumſtances, her party and intereſt is become annihilate; ſo that the event of the two laſt wars, attended with the effuſions of rivers of blood, and expenditure of countleſs millions, has ended in the tranſlation of Canada and Louiſiana, and the emancipation of the Thirteen States.

Warton. France might have profited by Horace's advice, applied to earthly things in general; *Vitæ ſumma brevis ſpem nos vetat inchoare longham.* Even her policy of accumulating

mulating the debts of England will probably fail her, as through the means of the ſtock-purchaſing ſcheme, Engliſh credit becomes the better in proportion to its becoming worſe, as more ſtock will be bought up and paid off, the lower it be. But the ſcheme was unjuſt, eſpecially to foreigners, who will profit nothing by a reduction of taxes, whilſt the ſcheme, by raiſing the price of ſtock, will render the intereſt and compound intereſt of leſs value in purchaſing freſh ſtock, as plainly as any proof in arithmetic. And, at the ſame time, the debt renders Britain in a manner the mart of the world; and her empire, and the Hanoverian ſucceſſion, an univerſal concern of other nations. But we wander from our ſubject, which was the polity of the regions below. If Pluto is ſynonimous with the devil, it is quite impoſſible to diſcover his qualities from his character on earth; and conſequently, thoſe who waver in their ſentiments towards him, are very excuſable in conſidering it as hypothetical. How, it may be alleged, can perſons determine concerning one who is termed *deviliſh good*,

deviliſh

deviliſh bad; *deviliſh clever*, *deviliſh aukward*; *deviliſh cunning*, *deviliſh fooliſh*, &c. &c. &c.— Has he any parliaments?

Johnſon. Only nominal; for if the members pretend to open their mouths, he immediately claps a coal in it, which he calls *carbonading*, inſtead of a ſop in ſack, as practiſed by the King of England, and ſome other princes.

Warton. Who is his prime-miniſter?

Johnſon. *Pride*, Sir, the ſon of the *World*, and elder brother of *Ambition*; whoſe influence pervades all the departments of ſtate. *Pleaſure* has at times preſided at the helm: but, beſides that Pluto conſiders him as wavering, and has even ſuſpected his loyalty, his temper is volatile and careleſs; and though his underſtanding and judgment are much ſuperior, (*Pride* being indeed the emptieſt fool exiſting, and feeding, like a cameleon, on air,) and his conſequence extenſive, it proved much leſs ſo than *Pride's*: and though they are in ſome degree

degree reciprocally influenced by each other, *Pride*'s pre-eminence is much greater, particularly on earth, whoſe human inhabitants are the moſt prepoſterous and fooliſh beings in the univerſe, as I have now diſcovered, inſomuch that a conſiderable part of the paſtime of the infernal inhabitants is to laugh at them, though they ſometimes are aſhamed to make them an object of their ſeduction and deriſion, they are ſo ſilly and contemptible. But the motive moſt prevalent with Pluto for maintaining *Pride* in the ſtation of premier, is his great influence with the clergy. However, to give the devil his due, underſtanding that his ſenate were divided into two great parties, that of *Pleaſure* and *Pride*, before he determined to place the latter at the helm, to the prejudice of the former, he ordered their reſpective beſt ſpeakers to urge their claims in his preſence, with the declaration, that the enſign of prime miniſter, on which *Detur Tetriori** is inſcribed, ſhould be given to merit. The argumentation on this oc-

* *Be the prize to the moſt horrible.*

caſion laſted a week; but I am ſorry that I am able to gratify you with only a ſmall part of the ſpeeches of *Cupid* on the ſide of *Pleaſure*, and of *Faſhion* on the ſide of *Pride*. *Cupid*, aware of his merit and weight, in any rational well-meaning aſſembly, but knowing that he ſhould loſe the cauſe in that, and intending, when it ſhould be decided againſt his patron, to take wing and fly to his mother, the planet *Venus*, made a whimſical requeſt, ere he ſpoke, that he might ſalute Proſerpine, who was preſent with her huſband. But Pluto, who is not remarkable for good humour, declared, with a horrible ſmile, that, had he not given his word that free ſpeech ſhould not be interrupted, he would have carbonaded him; for that however he was attached to him at the time he had ſeized Proſerpine, he had been ſince tired of them both, and that rational *Pleaſure* was the greateſt enemy to his dominions. Without doubt, this ungallant ſarcaſm ſtung Proſerpine, whoſe fate was very ſevere, but who, acquainted with Cupid's intention of paſſing to the planet Venus, meditated an elopement with

him;

him: and it muſt be ſuppoſed that Pluto's choler ſomewhat terrified Cupid, bold as he is on occaſion, yet his fright was not ſo great as to prevent his ſpeech, which, whilſt the plumes of his cap, which he held in his hand and gently waved, wafted fragrance around, but to which his audience prefer-ed the ſcent of ſulphur, was ſomewhat to this effect:—

" *O ye Infernals,*

" What wretched folly and ſtupidity
" poſſeſſes you, that ye ſhould forſake the
" banners of *Pleaſure*, under which ye have
" had ſuch eminent ſucceſs with mankind,
" to change them for that of the moſt empty
" and barren of all beings exiſting, *Pride?*
" Say, O ſay! who, ſince the creation of
" the earth, has occaſioned ſo much mi-
" ſery, calamity, and devaſtation thereon,
" as *Pleaſure*, and your humble ſervant?
" Not to go back to Adam and Eve them-
" ſelves, think, think of the ruin brought
" on the choſen Sampſon by Dalilah, and
" how David and Solomon were led aſtray
" by women! Recollect the havock cauſed

" by Helen, whoſe name enforces a pun;
" by Thais, and by Cleopatra. Then conſi-
" der, O ye Infernals! conſider the power
" of luxury to relax virtue; to render men
" careleſs; to induce libertiniſm, and irre-
" ligion, and corruption, all, all the off-
" ſpring of *Pleaſure!* Remember, O re-
" member the exploits of Bloods, Bucks,
" and Damn'd Honeſt Fellows! Think,
" think of the brawls, the execrations, the
" quarrels, the bloodſhed, the ruin of con-
" ſtitutions, degeneracy of the human race,
" and virulent poiſon mixed with their
" blood and become hereditary! Attend,
" O ye Infernals! attend to theſe things,
" and baniſh *Pleaſure*, the fountain of all
" the ills and evils of human kind, if ye
" can; to adopt the vacant giant *Pride!*
" O ye Infernals! do not the *Fleſh* and the
" *Devil* always go together?"

When *Cupid* had ceaſed, *Faſhion*, as he is re-preſented in the frontiſpiece of the New Bath Guide, and with a ſpacious pair of buckles, and diminutive hat in his hand, which yet was an overmatch for his brains, roſe with

ſome difficulty through the weight of club of hair and filth, and dreſſed with gunpowder in compliment to Pluto, ſpoke to the following effect:—

" *O ye Infernals,*

" Shall *Pleaſure*, trifling, ſhort-lived *Plea-*
" *ſure*, the paſtime of children, and relying
" on ſuch a whimpering advocate as *Cupid*,
" conteſt the favour of his Sulphureous
" Majeſty with the mighty *Pride*, whoſe
" ſtature reaches from hell to earth? Is
" there a prince; is there a lord; is there
" a biſhop; a ſquire; a parſon; a tradeſ-
" man; a farmer; a mechanic; a labourer;
" a chimney-ſweeper; a ſcullion; a perſon
" living on alms, not proud? Is there a
" Chriſtian on earth who does not value
" himſelf on diametrically contradicting the
" firſt principles of his religion? Are not
" the dignified clergy, to a man, devotees
" to *Pride?* It is notorious to the univerſe
" that they are: and though it muſt be
" confeſſed that their temperance and ab-
" ſtemiouſneſs are great, Pluto ſhall never
" be ſo ungrateful as to deny his obliga-

" tions to them. Yes, when Chriſtians be-
" come humble, and Whigs ceaſe to tyran-
" nize, then ſay there is no truth in the
" devil. *Cupid* vainly talks of the banners
" of *Pleaſure*. Aſk the great men of the
" world, even thoſe the fondeſt of *Pleaſure*,
" whether they eſteemed him of equal im-
" portance with *Pride*, or rather as an
" amuſement for an idle hour, or a jackall
" to *Pride*, and his brother *Ambition*. What
" if Love has ſometimes added flames to
" Ambition; is not *Pride* the original
" cauſe of all calamity and heartburnings
" among human kind? The whiffler, *Cupid*,
" has boaſted of the broken conſtitutions
" and poiſons entailed by luſt on mankind:
" and what then? Is it not *Pride* that
" takes delight to thwart and counteract
" nature, the real cauſe? Had love, as na-
" ture deſigned it, been equal, and not re-
" ſtrained by *Pride*, it would never have
" been pent up in a ſink of luſt, but would,
" like the Nile, have diſpenſed pleaſure and
" fertility over the earth. It is *Pride* that,
" together with its companion Folly, and
" your humble ſervant, is the root of every

" ill

" ill that awaits the earth. And it is paſt
" a doubt that your good ſenſe, O ye In-
" fernals, will give your decided ſuffrages
" for him who finds employment for you
" all; in which ye will confirm the judg-
" ment of thoſe worthy Britons, a people
" not always acting ſo agreeably to our
" wiſhes, who framed the marriage-act,
" that bitter pill to that wretched urchin
" *Cupid*, who has forſooth told us, that the
" *Fleſh* and the *Devil* always go together;
" but forgot that the *World* is placed firſt."

When *Pride* had ended, the hollow vaults reſounded with his name, and he was immediately inveſted with the enſign of miniſter; whilſt Cupid and Proſerpine waited for an opportunity of eloping to Venus.

Warton. Doctor, theſe anecdotes are marvelloufly entertaining: but as Ulyſſes and others have brought accounts before from the infernal regions, ſome concerning the elopement you mentioned would be ſtill more original. Proſerpine had indeed of all young ladies the hardeſt fortune, to be

carried off by ſuch a vile wretch to regions of brimſtone whilſt ſhe was gathering a noſegay; a rape celebrated by Milton in an Ovidian puerility bordering on a pun, but with more propriety by Addiſon in his *Cato*.

Johnſon. And, Sir, you know not that he compelled her to drink no liquor but Stygian porter, daſhed, as I underſtand, with Lethe inſtead of opium, which he affirms to be more ſavory than that of the Thames, which he declares would poiſon him; and that, though he cannot deny his temporary reſidence in London, he could never perſuade himſelf to taſte it.

Warton. Dear Doctor, I am impatient for an account of the elopement, it has the air of ſuch a curious novel, or rather romance: and indeed when a woman's wits are matched with the devil's, there is good ſcope for betting, though it is true that ſome of the more knowing ones ſurmiſe that Pluto was aware of the deſign, and, according to the practice

practice of his crooked politics, indirectly promoted it.

Johnſon. It happened that it was in agitation during the American war, a ſource of much joy to the lower regions: and it was concerted between Cupid and Proſerpine; it being Pluto's cuſtom, on the news of any diſaſter to the Britiſh arms, to have a revel, conſiſting of morrice-dancing, and all kinds of pranks; after which his majeſty ſmoked his pipe and ate a roll of brimſtone ſopped in Lethe, by way of a double nightcap; that on the next event of that kind, the deſign ſhould be put in execution. It was not long, though I know not whether it was General Burgoyne's or Lord Cornwallis's vanquiſhment, ere one of thoſe events enſued, and Pluto was ſo delighted that he invited the morrice-dancers; played himſelf many pranks and feats of deception; ſcraped horribly a monſtrous baſs-viol; ſtared and danced a hornpipe in cap and bells; was extremely pleaſant and gallant; ſwore Proſerpine was as handſome as when he firſt brought her down; ordered

a roll

a roll of brimſtone and Lethe for both himſelf and her, whilſt ſhe artfully put hers aſide, ſubſtituting a ſugar-roll and wine in their ſtead, and gave the former to Cerberus to lay him to reſt, and, when her huſband fell aſleep, ſet off with Cupid, who had been preſent at the ball in diſguiſe with a curricle and ſwans in waiting ;—

And from the dire abyſs they whirling drove
To *Venus*, and the lightſome realms of love,

after, according to a traditional computation, a reſidence below of about five thouſand years ; for there are not wanting ſome to affirm, that Proſerpine was no other than Eve, and that Pluto carried off Cupid, who was ſporting by her ſide, along with her.

Warton. When Pluto found that ſhe was gone, his rage muſt have been prodigious.

Johnſon. It was indeed dreadful, either real or pretended. He curſed even the Americans; for anger, like wine and love, ſpeaks the truth, and wiſhed they might live to feel the effects of their folly ; uttered

ed dreadful imprecations againſt *Pleaſure*, his late miniſter, and ſwore that if he did not leave hell immediately, he would carbonade him to eternity; but he might have withheld his threat, *Pleaſure*, and his advocate Cupid, now in the character of a page, having already taken a French leave and attended the runaway: curſed Cerberus for a lazy ſleepy hound; ſwore that but one of his three mouths ſhould ever be fed at a time; and that he ſhould never taſte a bit of brimſtone more; removed him from his ſtation of porter, and placed a monſtrous hydra in his ſtead: execrated Proſerpine for a long-legged fair-complexioned bitch, and Cupid for a capering moppeting puppet, and ſwore he would ſet up a hutch-trap for the Cz——a, fetch her down, and have *her* for his wife. He added, that he had always predicted the ruin of himſelf and his dominions from that ſpeckled planet Venus, and that he would purſue and bring them back, were not he afraid of being bound there for a thouſand years, and that they would prove the Millenium; for *Michael* take me, ſays he, if ever there be a

thouſand

thouſand years peace on my earth! But, in truth, ſays he, I rejoice that *Proſerpine* is gone, and that I have fairly got rid of her, together with the forcereſs *Pleaſure*, and the brat *Cupid*; for, added he, there has ſcarcely been a villain living but has, at one time or other, had his mind ſoftened by them, ſo that I have had but few thorough-bred offspring even on my own earth; and Michael fetch me if I myſelf have always been myſelf becauſe of them, d——n me! It is true that the conduct of mankind, both in word and deed, generally correſponds with my moſt ſanguine wiſhes: that their knavery and brutality keep due pace with the wanton execrations of their bodies and ſouls uttered without number every hour without any viſible motive but my gratification: that the mock laws againſt the latter, greatly promote them; and that filthy *Luſt* is a very excellent aſſiſtant and friend of mine, though Cupid, as the urchin himſelf obſerved, is quite of another caſt. Adds Pluto, it is not without good reaſon, I flatter myſelf, that, to ſay nothing of common ſwearers

and

and Mahometans, many Chriſtian magiſtrates when they ſwear to adminſter juſtice than which nothing is farther from their intentions; and ſovereigns when they direct *Te Deum* to be ſung for ſucceſs in their deſigns of laying waſte and ſubduing kingdoms, ſquint towards me.

Warton. I am inclined to think, Doctor, that, by this time you are leſs attached to the earth than you was.

Johnſon. Sir, you are right: from what I have picked up concerning Venus, no one would return to the earth, where worthy beings are thinner than valuable plants, and worthleſs thicker than weeds, could he have the whole.

Warton. Let me here obſerve what has occurred to me, that the univerſe, its vacuum however, muſt be neceſſarily infinite, that it is as difficult to ſet bounds to it as to eternity. The creation proper, as it might be termed, may indeed have bounds;

but

but it is impoſſible to conceive, ſuppoſe what you may, plenums or vacuums, but that there muſt be ſtill one or the other, ſtill ſomewhat beyond, carry your imagination whither you will. So that when we ſay God created the world out of nothing, we perhaps mean that he furniſhed a dark vacuum with bodies and ſubſtances of different kinds. Concerning the planets, except the earth, Moſes has acquainted us with nothing, becauſe he knew nothing. The ſtudy of aſtronomy is moſt marvellous and ſtupendous, at which the petty affairs of men hide indeed their diminiſhed heads. The late diſcoveries of Mr. Herſchel of volcanoes in the moon, of the Georgium Sidus, of its ſatellites, and immenſe magnitude exceeding all the bodies of our planetary ſyſtem, are curious and mighty indeed, if true, and muſt render his name immortal. I hope you will pardon this digreſſion.

Johnſon. Pluto, you remember, called *Venus* ſpeckled; the reaſon of which is, I underſtand, that ſhe is caſed with a ſubſtance reſembling

ſembling marble, but gemmed with differ-
ent precious ſtones, the cauſe of her bright
appearance, whilſt the earth is hardly viſi-
ble to her inhabitants. Your phyſiologiſts
on earth are extremely ignorant, and with-
out conception of any material ſubſtance
that could endure hardly the ſolar heat of
Venus, certainly not of Mercury for an
hour; not of a comet in its perihelion for
a minute, but it would be melted and
calcined into atoms; and yet ſome men
have had the preſumption to ſet bounds
to the power of Providence. Though the
torrid zone of Venus is, or would be, in-
ſufferably hot and uninhabitable to moſt
kinds of material beings, yet by a peculiar
concordia diſcors, very little analogous to any
with which we are acquainted, the ſur-
face of this planet emits from itſelf a light
and warmth which is counteracted by the
rays of the ſun, not totally different from
the extinction of fires by the ſun; ſo that
by theſe means, combined with the vary-
ing effects of different atmoſpheres, whilſt
the center of the planet is thus corrected,

and

and the heat moderated, the polar regions have an intrinſic light and heat; the former of which, about equal to twilight, renders a moon not neceſſary. And it is very probable, that Providence, by means of various incomprehenſible modifications, reſembling the endleſs variety of other parts of nature within our cognizance, may have thus rendered places habitable and comfortable. As to ſpiritual beings, unaffected by matter, all extremities either of heat or cold are probably the ſame to them, the ſuns themſelves, or the polar circles of the moſt diſtant planets.

Though the appearance of the ſurface of Venus is thus, it is, notwithſtanding, fertile in endleſs varieties of moſt beautiful plants, as much ſuperior to thoſe of the warmeſt regions of the earth, as they to thoſe of the Northern. But as the corporeal conſiſtence of the inhabitants is infinitely more excellent and refined than that of the inhabitants of earth, whoſe depraved nature, both in mind and body, is really mortify-

ing

ing and diſguſting to conſiderate and truly delicate perſons; ſo the vegetables of this planet do not become groſs food, but ſuch as the reader may endeavour to conceive in the idea of ambroſia; much leſs do the inhabitants eat the fleſh of other animals; ſo that I muſt own that the ideas of the ancient heathens were not all contemptible. Correſpondent with the leſſer vegetables, are the trees, which ſhooting up in innumerable forms of variegated beauty, by the ſides of numberleſs ſprings and natural fountains riſing through the marble ſurface, and ſpreading into cryſtal rivers and canals, over which fruits of various gliſtening hue hang dangling and dancing in the mirrour, verify almoſt literally,

> There ſilver rivers thro' enamell'd meadows glide,
> And golden trees enrich their ſide—

whilſt the glorious orb of the ſun ſuſpended like an immenſe furnace, in a clear blue ſky, adorns the ſcene with celeſtial radiance, diffuſing a delightful warmth without

ſcorching heat. This, it is true, is no more than what ſome ſpots of the earth may preſent, with reſembling, but inferior beauty, that portion of paradiſaical happineſs which ſurvived the fall, yet ſure of being contaminated with ſome alloy annexed to the race of Adam. In this bliſsful region, fear, anxiety, ambition, envy, malice, ſtrife, and the reſt of the baneful crew of tormentors, are unknown. Whilſt on earth even artificial good nature, good manners, is, in this polite age, as it is denominated, laid aſide, and every perſon is haughty and eager to announce his ſcornful importance and the contempt in which he holds others; it is in that planet improved into univerſal complacency and benevolence, and joined with gratitude to the genius of the place to which they aſcribe all the bleſſings of which their cup is full, whilſt the glow of the health of eternal youth dances in their viens fluſhed with joy, but not agitated with luſt, to whom theſe other lines of Cowley,

Such

Such robes the ſaints departed wear,
Woven all with light divine;
Such their exalted bodies are,
And with ſuch full glory ſhine—

are finely applicable.

Warton. Indeed, indeed, Doctor, you will make me hang myſelf, that I may anticipate thoſe happy regions, and enter them a volunteer;—

"O 'tis too much for man, but let it ne'er be leſs!"

O when, O when ſhall we get looſe from this vain world, the abode of guilt and ſorrow, and from flogging dull boys! I long, I long to tread yon milky way to the bright palace of eternal day! O what, what wonders are above in the vaſt abyſs of the ſkies, to which man, though grovelling here below in the ſhadow of death, is allied! You obſerve that the ſun hangs over Venus like a mighty furnace; what then muſt be its appearance to the inhabitants of Mercury! and what a boiling caldron of fire muſt itſelf be! Let us but fancy ourſelves ſpiritual

beings, ſeated in a comet at its remoteſt diſtance from the ſun, that appears little larger than a ſtar, whence we ſhall by degrees paſs into its very neighbourhood; what an aſtoniſhing contraſt! As we travel on, we ſurvey the planets becoming viſible by degrees, but at firſt cluſtering round the ſun: till, advancing, we perceive them at different diſtances, and of different ſizes; calculate how near we ſhall approach to each of them; perhaps paſs near enough to the Georgium Sidus, or Jupiter, to be aſtoniſhed at their ſtupendous magnitude, and perhaps have a glimpſe of ſome immenſe proportionate ſtructure on one or other of them; or near enough to Saturn to diſcover the nature of his ring; and at length ſee the ſun itſelf become more and more a tempeſtuous billowy boundleſs ocean of fire, and perhaps ruſh ſudden into the midſt of it as into a whirlpool, whilſt it roars ſtill louder and more dreadful at the acceſſion of new fuel. And ſtill perhaps this unfathomable fiery abyſs, prodigious beyond all conception, may be but one of a million

of

of leſſer ones, inconſiderable in compariſon of one a million times larger than any of theſe, perhaps the throne itſelf of God; for, in truth, when we ſay the ſecond, third, or ſeventh heavens, it is but words without meaning, over our heads or under our feet being in effect the ſame.

Johnſon. This is fine indeed, at which a Chriſtmas tavern-fire hides its diminiſhed head, how ſavory ſoever it uſed to be, and the excurſions of my *Rambler* were ſmall in compariſon. One might imagine that you had taken a trip beforehand into Venus, and enjoyed a dream there; where dreams are exquiſite, fraught with viſions of light ethereal ſleep engendered by ambroſia and nectar.

Warton. It is probable that, in a country like that, the inhabitants of which ſeem to be half ſpiritualized, they have modes of travelling, far ſuperior to ours on earth.—Have they balloons?

Johnſon. Yes, Sir: and a ſtory wanders, that

that *Pleaſure*, *Proſerpine*, and *Cupid*, invented them ſoon after their arrival, for the uſe chiefly of *Proſerpine*; *Pleaſure* uſually travelling in the air with *Cupid* in his carriages drawn by ſwans, or doves: and *Proſerpine* imagining that, from her abode with *Pluto*, ſhe could ſuſtain the heat of the planet *Mercury*, declared that ſhe would attempt a journey thither in her balloon. She accordingly ſet off one evening, was abſent for a conſiderable time, and when ſhe returned gave out, though it was conſidered as a forgery, that ſhe had hovered near enough to get intelligence that Pluto purſuing them on their elopement, had miſtaken *Mercury* for *Venus*, or imagined that they were gone to *Mercury*, intending to put him on a wrong ſcent, and that he had ſettled there.

This converſation between the good Doctors made ſuch an impreſſion on me, that, in my dream, I determined to borrow her balloon of Proſerpine and go up to *Venus* myſelf: but no ſooner was I arrived in the the clouds than, entangled among them, I

ſeemed

ſeemed to tumble out headlong, and awoke; ſo that I might be ſaid to miſtake a cloud for Juno. But I had another nap, during which, methought Dr. Johnſon preſented ſomething like the following letter, from a ſpirit of his acquaintance in Mercury, ſomewhat reſembling the Cock-lane ghoſt, as follows:

" DEAR DOCTOR,

" The planet Mercury, my preſent reſi-
" dence, comparable, from its activity to
" the mineral of the ſame name, is far from
" being ſo ill adapted to the habitation
" even of men, as is generally imagined;
" ſo that you need not ſo grievouſly regret
" your relinquiſhment of dear earth, eſpe-
" cially as I aſſure you of a haunch of ve-
" niſon whenever you ſhall promiſe us a
" viſit. Perhaps you may ſuppoſe that the
" ſun is here amply ſufficient to roaſt it, or
" an ox whole; but that is not the caſe
" even under the line. For though the ſun
" is not at more than a quarter of the diſ-

" tance

" tance from us that it is from the earth,
" it does not appear larger than a tea-table,
" by reaſon of the thinneſs of the atmoſ-
" phere, and, from the ſame cauſe, emits
" much leſs heat than might be imagined,
" as you know the mountains of Peru are
" covered with ſnow. And thus we un-
" derſtand that the appearance of the ſun,
" and temperature of the climate in Mars,
" are nearly the ſame as of the earth, by
" means of the groſſneſs of the atmoſphere,
" which retains warmth a long time, like
" water after ſun-ſet. From Jupiter we
" hear, that his belts are luminous bodies
" imparting heat, whereby alſo the ſun is
" multiplied in a manner correſpondent to
" his moons, as in Saturn, it, by means
" of his ring and other apparatus, is re-
" flected and multiplied in a wonderful
" manner. As to the Georgium Sidus,
" we have no poſt eſtabliſhed from thence,
" though it is not to be doubted that his
" apparatus is very great and wonderful, to
" reconcile the prodigious diſtance of the
" ſun which would appear to human eyes

" little more than a ſtar of the firſt magni-
" tude. Of comets, I can neither ſay nor con-
" ceive, it being deemed impracticable for
" mails to reach them, reconcilable with their
" exceſſively unequal diſtance from the ſun:
" only that as Dr. Reid holds Sir Iſaac
" Newton little better than a fool in op-
" tics; ſo his theory is, in regard to comets
" at leaſt, certainly weak, in imagining
" them merely ſet agoing in a vacuum,
" and to have continued their wild courſes
" ever ſince by means of gravitation; which,
" on the contrary, would, were not their
" orbits maintained by an unknown power,
" continuing their impetus, have precipi-
" tated them into the ſun. Again, Sir
" Iſaac's cauſe aſſigned for the tide on the
" part of the globe oppoſite to the moon
" and ſun in conjunction; that the ſea in
" the nadir being leſs attracted than other
" parts, gravitates leſs towards the center
" of the earth, and is conſequently higher,
" is no leſs futile: ſince to ſuch negative
" cauſe equally operating on the ſea on
" the part of the globe over which the ſun
" and moon act in conjunction, their con-

" current attraction, a positive cause, or
" causes, is superadded.

" As to the milky way, it may be no
" very wild imagination to suppose it to
" be heaven."

FINIS.

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